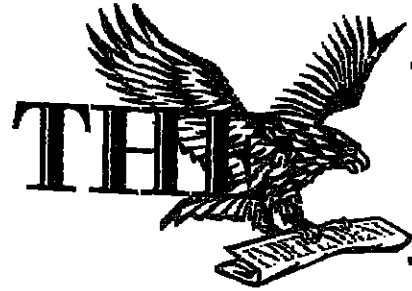


More Mr Nice Guy
John Lytle meets Gregory Peck, Hollywood's last noble man
Weekend, Page 3

Varsity splash
Behind the scenes at the Boat Race, through David Ashdown's lens
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THE INDEPENDENT

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SATURDAY 6 APRIL 1996

50p

40,000 in scare over faulty Aids test

Ministers accused of delaying information

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Health ministers were under pressure last night to explain why they delayed telling the public that a blood test for the Aids virus was faulty, and that people who have tested negative could be infected with HIV. Up to 40,000 blood samples are to be retested and hundreds of people are now facing an anxious Bank Holiday, after the Department of Health confirmed that the IMX HIV1/HIV2 antibody test, used in some NHS laboratories since September 1995, was not reliable.

Aids charities, hospitals, and helpines are being swamped with calls but can do little to reassure people at present. The Terrence Higgins Trust is advising anyone who has had an HIV test between September and March to use condoms during sex, and to go for re-testing as soon as possible.

The IMX test is also available throughout Europe, South America and Asia, posing huge problems for Abbott Laboratories, the Chicago-based manufacturer, which halted distribution of the test on 25 March.

Doctors say that only 1 per cent of the 60,000 HIV tests carried out annually are positive, and that the vast majority of people tested with the faulty kits will be reconfirmed as negative.

The Department of Health had known of problems with the IMX test, one of several used in the NHS, since last week, but said it wanted to delay the announcement until next Tuesday, when plans for retesting blood were in place, and Aids charities had been briefed.

Instead, Aids workers say they have been left to deal with thousands of worried people, unable to get medical advice because most clinics are closed for Easter.

Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokeswoman, said that the Easter Bank Holiday had exacerbated the crisis for many. "It is unfortunate that the Department of Health did not notify people as soon as they got the information, rather than wait for a public holiday," she said.

Susie Parsons, executive director of London Lighthouse, Europe's biggest HIV centre, where extra staff were brought in yesterday to man the switch-

boards, said lack of formal guidance from the Government had hindered its work.

"We understand that the manufacturers of this test suspended it on 25 March, which is quite some time ago, and we had to read about it in the press this morning. We have been trying to get through to the Department of Health all morning to see if it can give us some information which will enable us to help the people who are calling us, but unfortunately the lines are just blocked."

Dr Graham Winyard, deputy chief medical officer, said he "deeply regretted" the anxiety caused by the premature announcement. He advised people to make use of helpines over the weekend, adding: "The samples are already being tested and I am confident that the vast majority that have tested negative will still be negative."

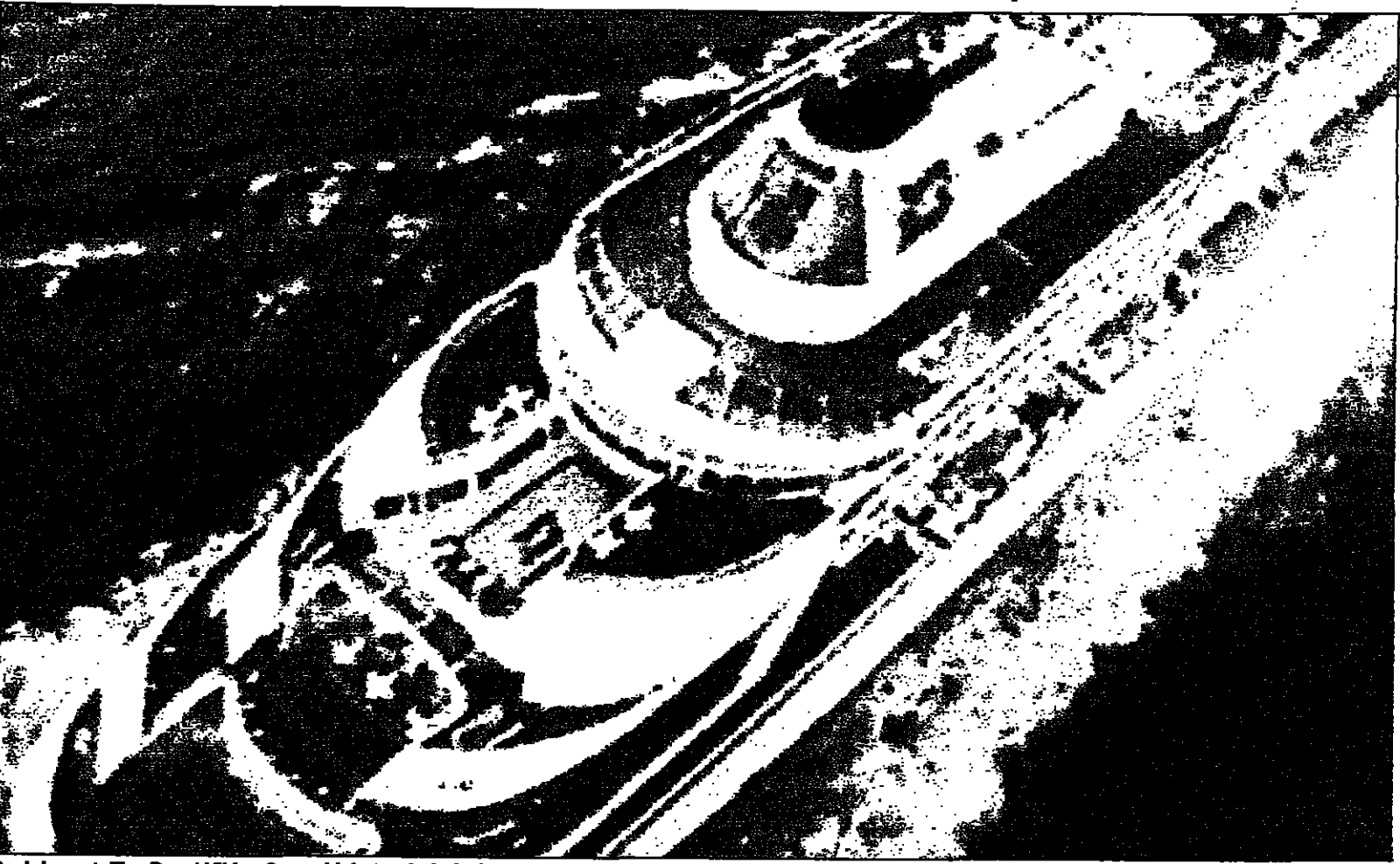
A letter sent on 29 March by Abbott Laboratories in Maidenhead, Berkshire, to laboratories which use the test, is believed to have been the source of the leak. A spokesman for Abbott Laboratories in Chicago said yesterday that the company had been alerted to a potential problem in late March when European laboratories reported inaccurate results with the test. A doctor in Portsmouth was among the first to query its reliability when he used it on a patient he knew to have full-blown Aids, and the result was negative.

Professor Jangu Banatvala, of the clinical virology unit at St Thomas' Hospital, London, where 5,000 samples are already being re-tested, said that only people with a very high number of HIV antibodies were at risk of testing negative instead of positive with the IMX test. Antibody status may be related to the stage of infection, with people only recently exposed to HIV and those on the verge of Aids being most likely to fit this profile.

Nick Partridge, chief executive of the Terrence Higgins Trust, said anybody who was wrongly tested as negative might be able to sue Abbott Laboratories.

A spokesman for one of the London clinics which carried out the tests, at St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, said: "We expect the retesting to take about one month."

Abrupt end for cruise of a lifetime as ship runs into reef



Back in port: The Royal Viking Sun, which was holed after hitting a reef in the Red Sea, cruising on the ocean during an earlier voyage. Photograph: Globetrotter

Liner accident may sink Cunard

LOUISE JURY

The future of the Cunard shipping line was in doubt last night as one of its most luxurious liners limped into port, ending the holiday-of-a-lifetime dreams of more than 500 passengers.

As an investigation was launched into why the 37,845-tonne *Royal Viking Sun* was holed after hitting a reef in the Red Sea, the company was making arrangements for the swift return home of those who had paid more than £21,000 for the 114-day world cruise.

Cunard tried desperately to limit the public relations disaster which beset its ill-fated "cruise from hell" in December 1994 when the *QE2* sailed from Southampton to New York with a refurbishment incomplete. Then, Cunard managers ac-

cused unhappy passengers of "whingeing". But the accident was unfortunate timing for the cruise line, coming only hours after the announcement that a £904m offer from the Norwegian company Kvaerner for Cunard's parent company Trafalgar House had been accepted by shareholders. Cunard is thought likely to be put on the market by its new owners.

No one was injured in the collision in the Strait of Tiran on Thursday, although a 73-year-old man suffering from kidney problems was airlifted to hospital for treatment.

But emergency procedures were instigated as the ship began taking on water and listing. Passengers and the 450 crew were forced to don life-jackets and go to lifeboat stations.

An operator at the international control centre in Stavanger, Norway, which controlled the rescue, said engine power was lost after the collision and pumps were used to expel the water and put the ship back on an even keel. "It must have been rather frightening for a time," he said.

The ship was towed to safety in the Egyptian port of Sharm el Sheikh. A newly-finished Marriott hotel in Sharm el Sheikh opened three days early to take more than 100 of the evacuees. Other luxury hotels, both in the port and in Cairo, were on standby to receive the passengers, of whom 54 were British, 350 American, 70 German and 27 from Asian Pacific countries.

Details were being finalised last night for their return to Europe today, where the Americans will make connecting flights home.

The *Royal Viking Sun*, rated the number one cruise liner in the world by the Berlitz travel guide, has luxury facilities including cabins with whirlpools, gold and mahogany fittings, theatres, spas, butler service and a computerised golf course.

Prices for the cruise, which began in Florida on 6 January and was due to take in 36 ports including Bangkok, Mombasa, Fiji and the Seychelles, started at £21,435.

But the accident will do nothing to restore confidence in Cunard, coming after the *QE2* debacle and an on-board fire earlier this year which forced another of its ships, the *Sagafjord*, out of service.

It comes as some sectors of the maritime industry warn of falling safety standards because of allegedly intense pressure from the shipping companies on the international regulatory body, the International Maritime Organisation.

But Walter Welch, of the Chamber of Shipping in London, said he was confident that safety procedures would be shown to have worked well with the Cunard liner.

"Big passenger ships are at sea every day carrying thousands of passengers and we rarely have a casualty," he said.

Ill-fated journey, page 3

man to prison for contempt, or by making her pay damages after hearing she was in poor health and had little money. The judge was given medical reports about the state of both her physical and mental health.

In 1995 Miss Danneman published *The Inner World of Jimi Hendrix*, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Hendrix's death. She claimed she had been engaged to Hendrix, though this was disputed.

Miss Danneman had lost an earlier libel action when she was ordered to pay £1,000 damages and costs after libelling Mrs Etchingham. She repeated the allegations in the book.

Worshipping Hendrix, page 3

Hendrix girlfriend found dead



Monika Danneman: 'Suicide' after court defeat

JAMES CUSICK

Monika Danneman, a former girlfriend of rock legend Jimi Hendrix, who only three days ago was found guilty of contempt in the High Court, was yesterday found dead in a furnished car near her Sussex home.

The apparent suicide of the German-born artist at her home in Seaford, Sussex, follows the court action brought by Kathy Etchingham, another of the rock star's girlfriends. Police discovered the body just before 10am.

It was in Miss Danneman's London flat that Hendrix was found dead from a drugs overdose in 1970. They met in Ger-

many in 1968 when Miss Danneman, then an ice skating champion, saw Hendrix at a concert.

The court case was the latest episode in a long running feud between the two women. It was brought because Miss Danneman, 48, had breached an undertaking that she would never repeat an allegation that Mrs Etchingham was an "inveterate liar" about her life and relationship with Hendrix. Mrs Etchingham, 49, now a doctor's wife with two teenage sons, had a 30-month relationship with Hendrix in the 1960s.

Mr Justice French said no public interest would be served by committing Miss Danne-

man to prison for contempt, or by making her pay damages after hearing she was in poor health and had little money. The judge was given medical reports about the state of both her physical and mental health.

In 1995 Miss Danneman published *The Inner World of Jimi Hendrix*, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Hendrix's death. She claimed she had been engaged to Hendrix, though this was disputed.

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Worshipping Hendrix, page 3

IN BRIEF

Clinton in arms row
Bill Clinton tacitly approved shipments of Iranian arms to Bosnia, despite the UN arms embargo. Page 13

Bomb victims' plight
Families living in flats damaged by the Docklands bomb have received no government compensation. Page 6

Legal challenge
An attempt to throw all 75 members of the Law Society's ruling council out of office will take place next week. Page 8

Today's weather
Dry with sunny spells in most regions. Page 2

Water, water everywhere – and a drop to drink

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Lancashire fishermen found themselves in the drink yesterday as they re-enacted scenes from the Ealing comedy *Whisky Galore* and pursued a liquid cargo that was lost six months ago but has surfaced in the Irish Sea.

Bottles of Scotch were selling for as little as £5 in the port of Fleetwood as the local population took to their boats in search of an alcoholic catch.

"The conversation round here is 'What bottles have you caught today?', not 'What fish have you caught?'," said a spokesman for the Harbour

Control office. "It's not very good stuff, though, so I'm told."

The alcoholic cargo, worth £50,000, was lost from the roll-on roll-off vessel *Spheroid* when a 26-ton container went overboard in October, off Drigg Point, in Cumbria.

It was thought the whisky had sunk 15 fathoms below the sea, but locals say the container has broken open and currents are dragging thousands of bottles along the seabed.

"The company knew where the cargo was lost, but they were keeping it a secret and hoping to send a salvage team to it," said Ged Lynch, senior watch

officer at Liverpool Coastguard. "The locals might have beaten them to it."

The coastguard received calls all day yesterday from would-be salvagers checking weather conditions before heading out to sea in the hope of a liquid catch.

Fleetwood Police said no offence was being committed, but after local radio reports that Customs and Excise officials were taking a keen interest in the matter, silence fell over Fleetwood. "I've got a terrible headache," said one skipper. "I'm told the whisky is a fine blend, but the salt's got to it. I haven't had any myself. You

won't find a skipper in Fleetwood who's touched a drop."

He said scenes at the port recalled *Whisky Galore*, a 1940's Ealing comedy based on the true story of the plundering of the SS *Politician*, which went down off the Scottish island of Barra with a cargo of Scotch. In 1990, a salvage operation was launched to rescue the under-water-matured blend.

A local poet lamented the loss of the Scotch with "The Quest For The Celtic Spirit": "With sadness we learned of the *Spheroid's* message it reminded us of that ancient adage

Worse things happen at sea
What could be worse than to
lose all that whisky?"

The poem in the Liverpool coastguard's newsletter, ends: "Any coastguard that's worth his salt is partial to a nip of Irish Mal. So on patrol at weekends we go. If anything's found, you'll be the last to know."

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IN BRIEF
 'Spy' Britons
 freed in Eritrea

A young clown faces up to his first taste of the circus

Garth Ellis, 7, being made up by his mother Kath in the build-up to his first public appearance as a clown. Garth first went to a circus when he was three and became captivated by the idea of appearing in the ring.

Tonight he will make his debut with Zippo's circus in Islington, north London, in the company of Zippo the clown, Stuffy and Tweedy, and Clown Alexis.

Zippo's, which describes itself as Europe's largest all-human circus, featuring 12 acrobats, will also be presenting horses for the first time in its 10-year history, featuring palominos.

Photograph: Geraint Lewis



On the rocks: Expensive embarrassment may seal fate of company struggling to recover credibility

Cunard image sinking fast after accident

TOM STEVENSON
 City Editor

The future ownership of Cunard was thrown into doubt by the hoing of the *Royal Viking Sun*, only hours after the cruise line's parent company, Trafalgar House, had been acquired by Kvaerner, a Norwegian engineering and shipping combine.

The timing of the accident could hardly have been worse for Kvaerner, which announced on Thursday morning that its £904m offer for Trafalgar House had been accepted by an overwhelming majority of its target's shareholders. The deal is now subject only to regulatory approval.

Kvaerner, which said yesterday it saw no reason for the deal to be jeopardised by the accident, has made no secret of its desire to sell on Cunard to recoup some of the cost of buying Trafalgar House. The Norwegian group has no interest in the engineering and construction company's non-core trophy assets, which until recently also included the Ritz hotel in London.

The accident raised questions about the ongoing value of Cunard, which has a price tag in Trafalgar House's accounts of £294m. That figure itself represented a big fall from a year earlier after a heavy write-down in its value was imposed

following the QE2's costly "cruise from hell" in December 1994 when a bungled refit led to hundreds of passengers making successful claims for compensation.

Yesterday a spokesman for Cunard said it was too early to tell how much the latest disaster would cost the company. At this stage there are too many variables such as the cost of chartering evacuation aircraft at short notice and towing the *Royal Viking Sun* to a port for repairs.

As well as the immediate cost, however, Thursday's accident represents a poor advertisement ahead of the proposed sale of Cunard's ageing fleet. Potential buyers, such as Britain's P&O, owner of Princess Cruises, and big rivals Royal Caribbean Cruises, Carnival Corporation and Disney, are already sceptical about the economic sense of buying older ships.

Modern cruise liners are more fuel-efficient, cheaper to run and gain more revenue from better on-board entertainment packages. Some observers think Cunard might have to spend \$1bn to bring its fleet up to scratch.

This latest high-profile accident is a commercial disaster for Cunard. Not only will it now face unquantifiable repair and compensation payments, its

reputation as the industry's poor relation is confirmed.

When a firm of consultants was sent into Cunard in the wake of the 1994 fiasco, it described it as "the worst-managed company we have ever looked at". It was a damning assessment of a fleet that included the QE2 and prided itself on unrivalled service.

A year ago a new chief executive, Peter Ward, was parachuted in to sort the company out. He was staggered by what he found: "There weren't even any business plans. There were two dozen different ways of making every decision."

The consultancy, Arthur D Little, sent staff to four Cunard offices in Sydney, London, Hong Kong and New York. All of them bought a ticket for the same berth on the same day and ship. Last year Cunard lost £16.4m and at least two more years of losses are forecast.

Cunard has suffered a number of embarrassing incidents at sea in recent years. Last month the *MS Sagafjord* drifted for four days in the South China Sea after an engine-room fire knocked out its power. While less widely reported than the QE2 fiasco, which cost £7.5m in refunds and travel credits, it was a major setback to Cunard's attempts to rebuild its tarnished image. The *Royal Viking* may have scuppered them for good.



Seasick: work going on during the QE2's 'cruise to Hell' in 1994, when it sailed before a £30m refit had been done.

Budget deals give boost to cruise industry

The plane-load of passengers that took off from Gatwick last night to join an Airtours ship in Tenerife have little in common with the people evacuated from the stricken *Royal Viking Sun*. But each end of the cruise spectrum, from budget to "five-star plus" luxury, provides evidence of the boom in cruising over the past year.

While mainstream package summer holidays from Britain continue to suffer from bookings below tour operators' worst expectations, the cruise business last year expanded by more than 25 per cent in passenger numbers to over 350,000. One reason is the entry of Airtours to the market, bringing low-price, high-volume expertise to a sector which had previously been the preserve of the wealthy.

Lancashire-based Airtours began cruises in the Mediterranean a year ago. Despite some initial hiccups such as the on-board beer running dry, its operation has been a success. Those Airtours passengers visiting the Canaries and Morocco over Easter have paid £479 each, compared with £21,500 for a world cruise on *Royal Viking Sun*. A much larger company, the US-based Carnival Cruise Line, has now taken a substantial holding in Airtours.

Britain's biggest tour operator, Thomson, is about to enter the cruise market with a programme mirroring Airtours' approach in Europe. The Disney Corporation has moved in too.

It is currently building two mega-liners in Italy, which will be based in Florida. British holidaymakers are to be offered "stay and cruise" holidays split between Walt Disney World and a Caribbean voyage.

The more established shipping lines say they welcome the new entrants, since awareness of cruising is stimulated. Both P&O Cruises and Fred Olsen Line report strong sales. It is against this background that Cunard last year lost £16.4m.

Journey into troubled waters

Cunard, a name synonymous with luxury ocean-going cruise liners for 150 years, has run into troubled waters in recent years.

■ It lost £16.5m last year and chief executive Peter Ward, brought in to turn it around, said it was unlikely to break even until 1998.

■ In March the Norwegian Kvaerner group bid £904m for Cunard's parent, Trafalgar House, sparking speculation that the company and could be put up for sale.

■ In February its cruise liner *Sagafjord* became becalmed in the South China Sea carrying 500 passengers. It was towed to the Philippines after a fire in the generator room. It is to be withdrawn from service.

■ Last year Southampton officials condemned food hygiene on board the QE2 and threatened legal action after inspecting its Queen's Grill.

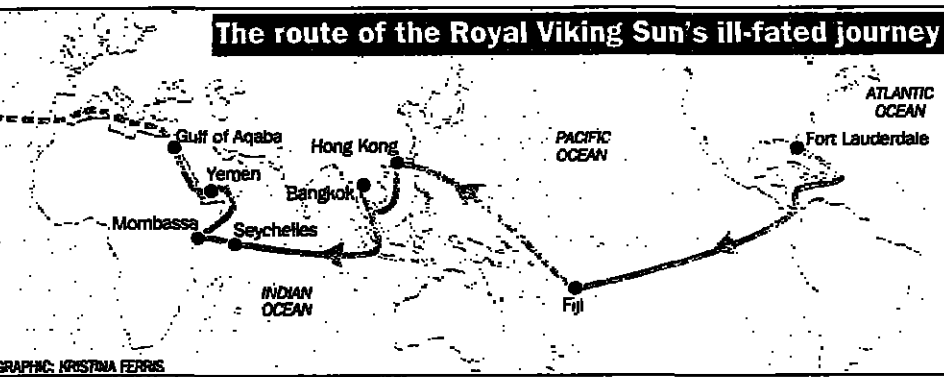
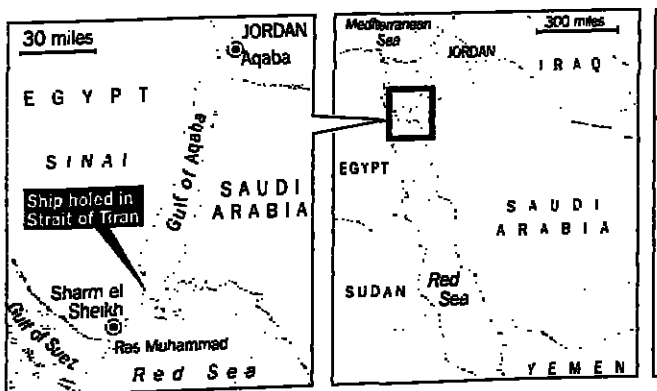
■ Cunard paid £7.5m to mutinous QE2 passengers after a trip dubbed the "cruise to Hell", in December 1994. It sailed before a £30m refit was completed, leading to complaints of "expanding toilets" and "leaky steam decks".

■ US coastguards accused Cunard of risking passengers' lives and said the ship should never have been allowed to set sail. They blocked its departure from New York while essential repairs were done.

■ Plans for a another £15m QE2 refit were announced this week.

■ In 1993 Cunard was fined £1,000 and told to pay £120 after complaints that a cruise advertised as a "two-day" trip lasted only 38 hours.

■ The QE2 grounded in 1992 after striking an "unchanged" object off the eastern US. Millions of pounds were lost while repairs took the ship out of service.



Tragic end for the woman who worshipped Hendrix

JAMES CUSICK
 and NICOLE VEASH

On any corner of Greenwich Village in New York or Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, California, strains of the Sixties can usually be heard, performed by an ageing hippy and his guitar. More often than not the song is Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changing." But for Monika Danneman, the archetypal rock chick and one time girlfriend of guitar legend Jimi Hendrix, time just never did change.

In the undefined mid-1990s, with youth culture struggling for an identity, the retro-fashion of the decade of Timothy Leary and the Beatles, youth protest and freedom, looks appealing. Then Jimi Hendrix was the resident, atonal, psychedelic freak; a black musician become rock hero. Eric Clapton, for some, was his white equivalent,



Monika Danneman: Lived in 'domestic bliss' with Hendrix

but with one crucial difference. Eric is still alive and ageing. Now both Hendrix and his final girlfriend are gone.

Hendrix's extraordinary technique attracted a cult following. On his first tour in London, he supported the Monkees, an industry-invented "Take That"

Rock 'n' roll death: Defeat in her court case this week may have proved too much for Monika Danneman

troupe, loved by mums and dads. German-born Monika Danneman was a champion ice-skater when she met Hendrix in 1968 in a Düsseldorf bar. As chronicler of her own legend, she claims she fell in love straight away. Then there was a gap of some years before the romance was rekindled in London.

In her book, *The Inner Life of Jimi Hendrix*, published last year to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Hendrix's drug-induced death, the couple are described as living anything but a life of sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. There was apparent domestic bliss in a rented flat in Notting Hill Gate where Hendrix talked about "life and death for hours". She says they were engaged and she wore a

massive golden serpent that wrapped round her finger.

She was wearing the ring at the High Court last week when she was convicted of contempt of court for continuing a libel against another of the rock star's women. The reality, for those who knew Hendrix well, was that Danneman only ever occupied three weeks out of the rock hero's short life.

The woman Danneman regarded as her rival, Kathy Etchingham, was the long-standing "Foxy Lady" girlfriend of Hendrix. She has moved on from her Sixties' days, and is now the respectable wife of a doctor and mother of two teenage sons.

Danneman in court looked the classic Sixties babe: long



Jimi Hendrix: Guitar hero with extraordinary technique

blonde feathered hair, tight black suit with bright red satin underneath, lots of rings, lots of jewellery, heavy mascara, and a mohair coat. Appearing every inch the rock star girlfriend, in her mind she remained anchored to the Hendrix legend.

Hendrix died on 18 Septem-

ber 1970, in Danneman's Notting Hill flat. Those who have examined the timetable of the death point to a missing five hours between Danneman's alleged first discovery of the body and the arrival of an ambulance.

In 1994, the Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell reopened the file on the death. The subsequent investigation cleared Danneman of suggestions that she delayed calling the ambulance.

After Hendrix's death, she turned him into a personal religion - worshipping by painting oil pictures of him "on the astral plane" and continuing to write about him. The painting and drawings covered her house which became a shrine to lost love.

By the end of her life she had become a virtual recluse. She recently said: "It is a lonely life. But if I'd not met Jimi, my life would have been very ordinary."

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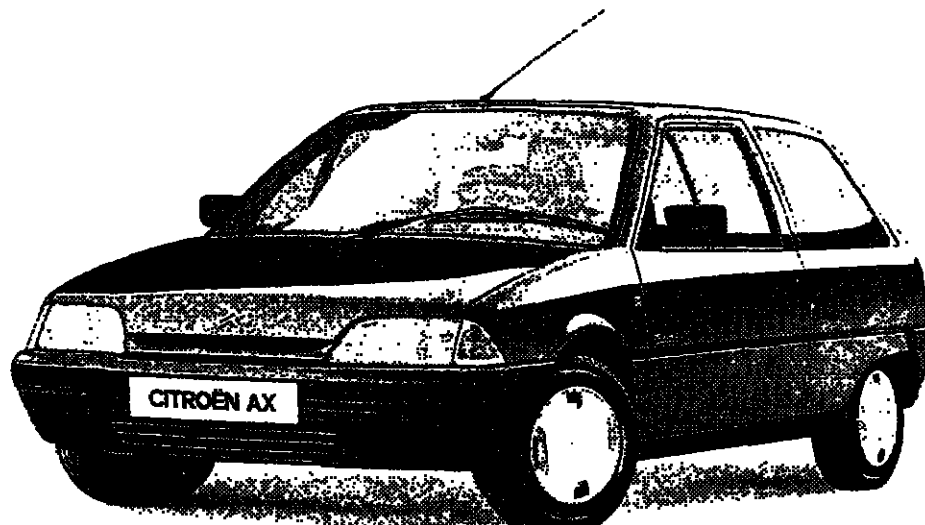
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Chris Blackhurst

Mum puts
in rock ba
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Dorothy Carter
and home on T

Quashed conviction leads to fresh nightmare

Chris Blackhurst reports on a life shattered by the arms-to-Iraq affair

Ali Daghir rues the day he won his appeal against conviction for trying to send nuclear triggers to Iraq in 1994. For while the Court of Appeal's decision, delivered after just two hours of representation and 15 minutes deliberation, brought to an end a personal nightmare, a new one was just beginning.

After having served 15 months of a five-year jail sentence, Mr Daghir, a British citizen who was born in Iraq, found his once-thriving business and family life in tatters. Without compensation he has been forced to put his house in Esher, Surrey, up for sale. His wife, the mother of his four children, has left him.

He cannot get work because of what happened and, because the Americans refuse to lift their own indictment against him, he cannot travel overseas for fear of being arrested and extradited. At 55, he is a virtual prisoner in a country which he still adores but with a system of justice he now finds hard to stomach.

Like other businessmen whose lives have been shattered by the arms-to-Iraq saga and who found themselves the vic-

tims of the zeal of Customs and Excise to secure convictions, Mr Daghir is gearing up to claim damages from the Home Office. At the very least, he reckons, he is owed about £40,000 for his time in prison and £1m for the loss of business profits.

In theory, he should have a good case: Mr Daghir and his assistant, Jeanine Speckman, are the only British people to have been jailed in the whole arms-to-Iraq affair. But unlike some of the other defendants, notably Reginald Dunk, whose claim for compensation has been acknowledged by the Home Office following publication of the Scott report and whose case was highlighted in the *Independent* last week, Mr Daghir is on thin ground, through no fault of his own.

His difficulty is that after he was convicted in June 1991 of attempting to supply £5,000 worth of ordinary electrical capacitors and won a right to appeal after fresh evidence came to light, his conviction was actually quashed on a technicality.

Instead of hearing the new evidence — a conclusive report from the United Nations nuclear



'Sting' victim: Ali Daghir in 1991, when he was wrongly convicted of sending detonators to Iraq. Photograph: Photo News Service

inspection team that the capacitors from Mr Daghir's firm, Euromac, were not the same as those intended to detonate Iraq's atomic weapons and that he had been set up in a "sting" operation — the Court of Appeal quashed his conviction.

because the trial judge's summing-up was badly phrased. The Home Secretary only has power to authorise compensation where new evidence is submitted showing a miscarriage of justice has occurred. In cases of judicial error, the Home

Office recently wrote to Mr Daghir's MP, Ian Taylor, there are no grounds for payment.

Mr Daghir's tragedy is that he had many grounds of appeal, of which the first handful dealt with the judge's summing-up. The others related to new evidence

proving he was not the heinous criminal Customs said he was. They showed his products were not destined for Iraq's nuclear bombs and that he had been the victim of a sting by US Customs, Mr Daghir said. "I did not

THE 'VICTIMS'

Paul Spencer, 40, was head of Odeon's 'Technology' department. He sold an IBM model 1180 to Iraq in the late 1980s. He was later acquitted on appeal when it emerged the prosecution had withheld this. He provided British security officials with information about Iraq's war plans. Last year he was arrested by Iraqi police in London and is fighting extradition to Iraq to the US on charges of conspiring to bank fraud and violating arms export controls. He was convicted on similar charges in Britain. Reginald Dunk, 76, was wrongly prosecuted 11 years ago for attempting to smuggle 200 Sterling silver machine guns to Iraq via Jordan. The Home Office now accepts, in principle, it made a mistake. Diplomats may now face prosecution for delivering a false trial. Paul Henderson, the former managing director of Marks & Spencer, the criminal case against him, which collapsed in 1992, and the outcry over withheld prosecution evidence, resulted in the Scott inquiry. Henderson, it emerged, had been involved in helping MI6 gather intelligence. He is considering a claim for damages against a 'malicious' prosecution attempt by Customs and Excise.

appeal, following production of the UN report. It suggests hearing the technical grounds first, and saving the fresh, potentially embarrassing, evidence until later. "Mr Moses QC [Alan Moses, senior Customs counsel in the Matrix Churchill case] feels that all the grounds of appeal other than the question of the fresh evidence be dealt with first. If the court were to rule in the appellant's favour on any of the issues in a way that disposed of the appeal, it would be unnecessary to deal with the question of fresh evidence."

That is what happened. He was freed on a technicality, the new evidence was not heard, he has no automatic right to compensation. His solicitor, Lawrence Kormonick, is preparing a new case to persuade the Home Office to reconsider his application. "He has been in prison for 15 months, unemployed for several years, has lost his company, cannot travel abroad and has had this hanging over him for six years," Mr Kormonick said.

If his claim is contested, it could be years before he receives any money. "I think the time has now come for him to be properly compensated for his suffering and I hope that he will not have to wait too much longer," Mr Kormonick said.

Mum puts dent in rock band's wild man image

A burgeoning row over claims by two members of the top rock group Oasis that they once burgled houses and stole car radios took an unexpected turn yesterday when their mother entered the fray to insist that they were nice thoughtful boys who, as far as she knew, had never been involved in crime.

The row began when Tory MPs were alerted to comments by Noel Gallagher, brother of Oasis co-star Liam, reported in *Melody Maker*. He is said to have told the paper: "What people have got to understand is that we are lads. We have burgled houses and nicked car stereos, and we like girls and swear and take the piss."

The comments incensed a number of Tory MPs who pressed for a police investigation. Harry Greenway, MP for Ealing North, said: "If the members of this group mean what they say then it is a matter for very serious concern."

Sir Wyn Roberts, MP for Conwy, added: "If they are

owning up generally to burgling, perhaps they would help the police by letting them know which houses and which premises they burgled."

Police agreed to investigate the reports, but then the Gallagher's image as the wild men of rock took a deeply embarrassing twist, by courtesy of their mother.

Margaret Gallagher insisted that, despite their outrageous claims, they were just a couple of nice boys who loved their mum. She also claimed that she would have known if they had been involved in crime as they had lived at home with her — Noel until he was 23. "As far as I know they were never involved in any crime at all. They were just normal boys growing up," she told BBC Radio 4's *World at One* programme.

A spokesman for Oasis's record company, Creation, said: "We think it's a bit of a storm in a teacup. The chances are Noel's original comments were tongue-in-cheek."



Liam (left) and Noel Gallagher: No truth, their mother says, in the 'life of crime' claims that infuriated Tory MPs



D'Oyly Carte may find home on Tyne

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Gilbert and Sullivan may soon be added to coal, the Metro-Centre, five bridges over the Tyne, and Kevin Keegan's United on the list of things that Newcastle is famous for.

D'Oyly Carte, the world-famous operatic company dedicated to the popular work of Gilbert and Sullivan, is considering settling down on Tyneside following the offer by a local businessman for support for a permanent home in the city.

A spokesman for D'Oyly Carte said Tynesiders had a love of Gilbert and Sullivan almost second to none in Britain. "Newcastle is one of our best venues and the public do support us up there. It is one of the top four dates with Plymouth, Wolverhampton and Norwich."

"In the North-east there is a real culture of amateurs that has generated the interest." The company formed by Richard D'Oyly Carte is based in Birmingham, but its five-year contract ran out in December 1995 and it is currently negotiating for an extension to stay in Birmingham or transfer to a new home in Newcastle.

The company's natural home was the Savoy Theatre in the

Strand, London, built by Richard D'Oyly Carte on the proceeds of the *Mikado*, but D'Oyly Carte folded in 1982, when the public was more interested in rock musicals, such as *Godspell* and *Hair*.

The D'Oyly Carte company was revived in 1988 with a bequest of £1m by a member of the D'Oyly Carte family.

There are detailed negotiations about an opera house in Newcastle to be resolved, but the city council there has pledged support and there is the possibility of funding from the National Lottery in the future, if the National Lottery Act is changed to allow privately-owned buildings to receive lottery cash.

Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage, disclosed the possibility that D'Oyly Carte could be found a permanent home in Newcastle when she was pressed to help at a meeting of the Commons National Heritage Select Committee.

Toby Jessel, the Tory MP for Twickenham and an accomplished pianist, called on Mrs Bottomley to help preserve Gilbert and Sullivan's music which he said was as much a part of British culture as roast beef.

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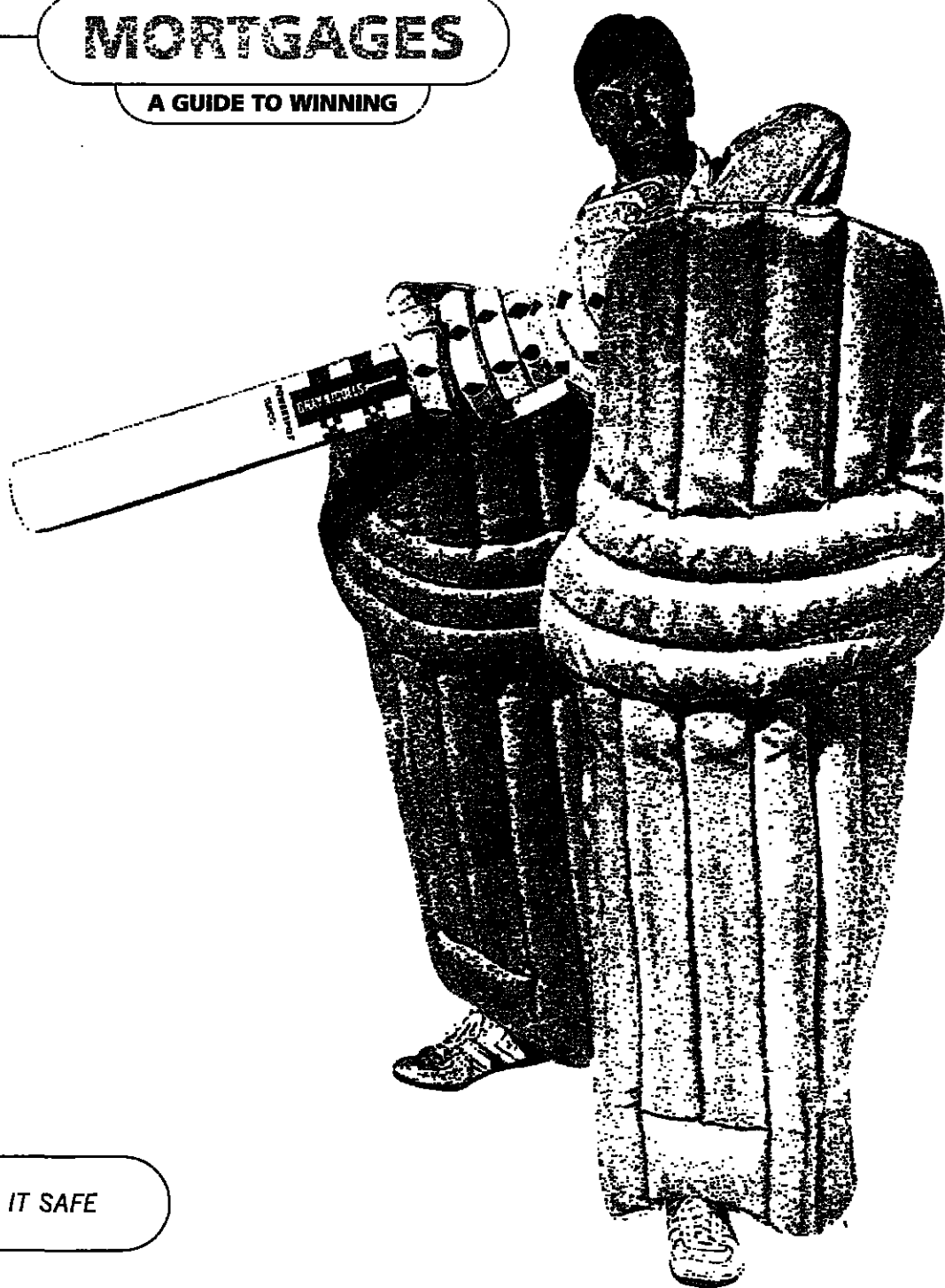


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news

Docklands blast: Victims beset by damage to property and rehousing still to receive any financial help or trauma counselling

Bomb families face compensation fight

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Families whose homes were badly damaged by the Docklands bomb in February have received no compensation and many have received no counselling for the trauma they suffered.

There is no form of official compensation for people who lose property in a bomb explosion in Britain. Few of the families living on the Isle of Dogs, close to the South Quay blast, had insurance policies.

Some families have been offered loans from the Government's Social Fund, but many have been unable to take them up because they cannot afford the repayments.

Eight weeks after the bombing, rehoused families say their children are having nightmares

and are having to live in homes without carpets and curtains.

Elizabeth Holdgate, 26, a single mother with four children under the age of five, was rehoused after the bomb. Miss Holdgate said her flat had been badly damaged in the blast. She could not afford insurance, and now lives in a flat without carpets, wallpaper or curtains and little furniture.

The windows of her flat were blown in by the bomb, except the living-room where Miss Holdgate was sitting with her baby, then four months old. Her other children, aged two, four and five, were playing on the stairs. "They could so easily have been killed," she said.

"Prince Charles came and saw us and someone from the Government said they would

look after us," she says. "I had just moved into the flat after waiting five years for a council house. I started trying to get compensation, but it took so long I couldn't wait. I've got young children and a baby and I don't have much money."

She gets just £75 a week from the state and was forced to turn to a loan shark to help pay for her damaged curtains. "A man came round and offered me some money... about £200. I pay him money every week."

She said she would like counselling for her children, particularly her five-year-old daughter who has nightmares. "Last night she was screaming, saying a big plane was crashing into the house."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Environment said:

"There is no government compensation scheme for bomb victims. They could try... the Social Fund or the criminal injuries compensation board."

Tower Hamlets council estimates that the bomb, which also damaged a school and caused structural damage to hundreds of homes, will cost it around £1m. The Government has yet to decide where this money is to come from.

Nick Raynsford, Labour's London spokesman, said it had been suggested that the council's costs would be covered by the Bellwin scheme, set up to cover unexpected events. However, there were drawbacks because the council had not been able to afford insurance for the area, which is close to Docklands' commercial centres.



Bad dream: Elizabeth Holdgate and family. 'My daughter is having nightmares,' she says

Photograph: Nick Turpin

Hard-up are denied Social Fund grant

The Docklands bomb in February badly damaged Lantern House, a block of council flats on the Barkantine Estate, close to the blast at South Quay.

All 80 flats, including Miss Holdgate's, were evacuated on the Tuesday after the bombing, as John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, began a visit to Docklands to see the devastation. The Prince of Wales also visited the area.

Half of the windows at the front of the block and 70 per cent at the back were found to have been blown out. Structural engineers later served a "dangerous structure notice" on 17 flats in Lantern House, after internal walls were "fractured" after being shifted by the force.

Tower Hamlets council has replaced windows and window frames, although the block was uninsured because of the high premiums demanded by its proximity to the Docklands commercial district. However, the force of the blast also damaged personal property, with families

reporting that curtains, bedspreads, furniture and floorings were damaged by flying glass.

Of the 17 rehoused, eight applied to the Social Fund, the government's fund for "easing exceptional pressures on a person and his family", for a grant to furnish their new houses. All were turned down and instead offered a loan to be repaid out of social security benefits. In one case, instalments required were £30 per week out of social security benefits of £150 per week, where a couple had three children to support.

Stephen Molyneux, a Tower Hamlets councillor, said: "The families from Lantern House are really just the tip of an iceberg. There were over 550 families affected by the blast."

"I know of many families who haven't applied to the Social Fund because they are already repaying loans or they know they can't afford the

I am worrying about how I can survive

Shafiqi Rahman, 61, was among those evacuated after the blast and rehoused in east London. He and his wife, Khatun, have four children still living at home. Mr Rahman, who is retired, had lived at Lantern House for several years and had decorated every room in the flat.

He applied to the Social Fund for a grant of nearly £5,000, which he estimated he had spent in refurbishment. His application was turned down but he was given a loan for £959 for "high priority needs", which he is to pay off at £28.50 per week out of his £154.25 income support.

"I am worrying about how I can survive," he said. "The children are still very upset. My daughter had to stay off school today because she was very up-

set by a nightmare and we didn't know what to do with her."

A single mother with six children lost carpets, washing machine, Christmas presents, curtains, bookshelves and lampshades. Her children have had to change schools because of the distance from their old school.

"They wake up in the night and burst out crying," she said. She receives £104 social security benefit and is paying £13 per week for a Social Fund loan she took out when she moved to Lantern House. Told she would receive a loan rather than a grant for the bomb damage, she decided she could not afford further repayments. She lives in a bare flat without carpet, curtains or adequate furniture.

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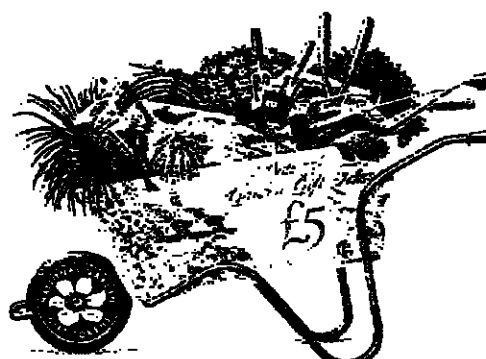
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news

Inquiry into Celtic sex abuse claims

Detectives were called in to investigate allegations of sexual abuse on young players at Celtic Football Club, it was confirmed last night. Strathclyde Police said a senior detective led an investigation at the club and inquiries were now complete.

A spokeswoman said: "We can confirm that an inquiry has taken place into allegations of sexual abuse of young players at Celtic Football Club. However, these allegations have not been substantiated. No report has been forwarded to the procurator fiscal."

It is understood several players and officials at Celtic, both in the boys' team and senior club, were interviewed as part of the investigation.

According to reports yesterday, the police were called in by Celtic chief Fergus McCann after an internal investigation at the club into allegations of abuse during a boys' club tournament in the United States. It was also reported that further allegations surrounding the boys' club have been made over the past few years.

In a statement last night, Mr McCann said of the police investigation: "This matter is not currently affecting Celtic FC. Since the change of control at Celtic Park, complaints were made regarding an alleged incident in New Jersey in 1991 involving Celtic Boys' Club. Following the Boys' Club's return to Britain one of its officials resigned... the matter was referred by the club to Strathclyde Police for investigation."

Solicitor moves to oust Law Society leaders

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

A grassroots attempt to throw all 75 members of the Law Society's ruling council out of office will take place next week. The move, the latest blow to a faction-riven profession, comes from a Bournemouth solicitor, John Edge, who has been leading a campaign to bring back scale fees for house conveyancing.

Mr Edge has obtained a legal opinion from a leading QC, Michael Beloff, advising that a special general meeting, which could be forced by just 100 of the society's 66,000 solicitors, could change the organisation's by-laws to bring to an end the term of office of all or any of the members of the council.

The development is a further manifestation of the turmoil within the profession heralded by the surprise election of the anti-establishment Martin Mears as the society's president last summer. Mr Mears has set about dismantling the society's liberal image and has pledged himself to the cause of boosting the incomes of smaller solicitors' firms struggling to make a living on cut-price conveyancing during a property slump. But he and the society's vice-president, Robert Sayer, have encountered deep resistance within the council.



Martin Mears: Pledged to boost small firms' incomes

Mr Edge has taken the reform agenda further, garnering support for a campaign for the reinstatement of scale fees, which were abolished in the early Seventies, and has used cash from a fighting fund to pay for Mr Beloff's opinion.

He has also thrown down another, separate, gauntlet by setting up with the council member Anthony Bogan a Solicitors Association with the aim of taking charge of the society's "trade union" function. The pair claim that whenever there is a conflict of interest between this and the society's regulatory role, the regulatory role always wins.

According to the society, the process Mr Edge plans to initiate next week could take two meetings, one to change the rules and another to vote on removing the council members from office. A fifth of the members at either meeting could also call for a postal ballot of the entire profession.

The process is not expected to be completed by the time of this summer's council elections, but since no candidates to oppose Mr Mears and Mr Sayer for the two top jobs have yet declared themselves, the momentum for change is unlikely to wane.

Mr Edge, who is angered by the fact that all but nine of the present council members were elected unopposed, claims that he and his supporters would win "hands down" in a postal ballot because rank and file solicitors have lost confidence in the ability of the society to represent them.

Even if they won, however, it is questionable whether scale fees, a retail price maintenance mechanism, could legally be reintroduced. Any change in solicitors' rules to bring them back would have to be shown to be in the public interest before the Office of Fair Trading would approve them. The Master of the Rolls, Lord Bingham, would also have to give his approval. The society believes the argument is dead.

Leading article, page 18

Three-wheeler's rescue comes just as Tokyo unveils potential rival



Space-saver: Daihatsu's new single-seater, 660cc Midget II at its launch in Tokyo yesterday

Photograph: John Pryke

Reliant Robin finds a saviour

WILL BENNETT

The Reliant Robin, nicknamed the Plastic Pig and for years an endless source of jokes for comedians, will soon be back in full production in Britain after the company was bought for more than

£300,000 by a former Jaguar executive.

It is the third attempt to secure the future of the Reliant company, which collapsed with debts of about £1.5m last December. Its new saviour is Jonathan Heynes, who spent 25 years with Jaguar producing luxury cars.

Yesterday, Mr Heynes said that he would take on between 50 and 90 people, many of them former workers at the Reliant factory in Tamworth, Staffordshire, and promised a future for the fibreglass three-wheeler vehicles.

"It took a lot of careful thought before bidding for the company and I am going into this with the ambition of making Reliant a profit-making company," said Mr Heynes.

"The skeleton staff of 12 will continue for the moment. I will be going in to speak to them after the Bank Holiday and then we will be speaking to former workers with a view to getting them back in. Reliant produces a good-quality product and

there is no reason why it should not be successful again."

Reliant has been in financial difficulties for five years and went into receivership in 1990 when it was taken over by Beans Industries. In 1994 the receivers were called in again after the firm suffered £2m of bad debts.

Avonex bought the firm in January 1995 but by December of that year Reliant was about £2m in debt and was forced to lay off 100 workers and call in the administrators. The company said that it had never recovered from the cost of moving equipment to Tamworth.

Although Mr Heynes's bid is thought to have been about £30,000 less than a rival one, the administrators regarded it as the best overall deal. He has purchased the British rights to produce the Robin and other Reliant vehicles while the overseas rights have been sold to an Indonesian businessman for £500,000.

Kevin Murphy, of the ad-

ministrators Finn Associates, said: "We are very pleased and we think we have a good deal for the creditors. It means that the future for Reliant in south Staffordshire is secure and it is good news for jobs."

Asked whether creditors would get their money back, Mr Heynes said: "Certainly the preferential creditors, I believe, will be seeing the majority of their money back. At the moment we are not quite so sure about unsecured creditors."

Mr Heynes started with Jaguar in 1964 as an apprentice and spent 25 years with them before setting up his own business. That was sold in 1990 and he returned to South Africa, where he had previously worked for Jaguar, to start another company.

About 44,000 people own Reliant Robins in Britain, many of them keen members of owners' clubs. The car achieved television fame as the chosen mode of transport of Del Boy in BBC's comedy series *Only Fools and Horses*.



New start: Jonathan Heynes with a Reliant Robin in Tamworth yesterday Photograph: Dan Chung

Teachers plot hostile return for Shephard

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, will face protests from angry teachers when she addresses the biggest teachers' union today.

Left-wing groups are advising their members to sit in "stono silence" during the speech by Mrs Shephard, the first Secretary of State to speak to a National Union of Teachers' Conference for 16 years.

The most militant delegates, including those who mobbed David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, last year, may walk out of the Cardiff conference.

Carole Regan, the incoming president, and a member of the "hard left", said she regretted the union executive decision to invite Mrs Shephard. "I don't think we should be inviting people who have destroyed education in the way the Government has done."

Teachers are furious about Mrs Shephard's decision to publish league tables for primary schools and to give into pressure from the Prime Minister for more grammar schools.

Mark Carlisle, the last Secretary of State for Education to address the conference, was booed off the platform.

Doug McAvoy, the union's general secretary, said the executive had invited Mrs Shephard, Mr Blunkett and Don Foster, the Liberal Democrats' education spokesman, to give them an opportunity to explain their views before the general election.

"It would demonstrate a weakness in the union to listen only to those it nearly agrees with," Mr McAvoy said.

Mrs Regan, a member of the socialist Teachers' Alliance, said she thought that "stono silence" was the best way to receive the Secretary of State. She urged Militant not to disrupt Mrs Shephard's 20-minute speech.

At last year's conference in Blackpool, protesters jostled and threatened Mr Blunkett and pinned him in a small room while they shouted slogans outside. None of the protesters have been expelled from the union and most are expected to be present this year.

Mrs Regan said: "I hope the people involved have learnt their lesson. They didn't get very much from it and were admonished by the majority of union members."

Mr McAvoy said Mrs Shephard could not expect a warm welcome, particularly after her U-turn on primary school league tables. He said: "I hope

delegates will receive her in an appropriate way having regard to the fact that it is the NUT which is on show and not individual delegates."

He said he also hoped that Mr Blunkett, who will address the conference tomorrow would be received appropriately.

Splits between delegates and the leadership will surface again on Monday when the conference debates the executive's proposal to give all members a vote on important policy issues.

Local associations would have to ballot all members before sending motions to conference and conference decisions would have to be ratified by ballot.

At present, the conference is the union's policy-making body. Union leaders are proposing changes after the left inflicted a series of defeats on the executive at last year's conference.

Conference motions calling for a one-day strike over class size and a special conference on salaries were overturned by a ballot of members.

Members have also been balloted on one-member-one-vote. Mr McAvoy said: "In every area members have voted to extend democracy in the way the executive have suggested. If conference rejects that, it will be rejecting the views of members."

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THE PUNCH SERVICE

£950 death payment for firefighter unchanged

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The Government has refused to increase the £950 lump sum received by the parents of the heroine Fleur Lombard, the first female firefighter to be killed on active duty in Britain.

Despite protests from the Fire Brigades Union, the Home Office has decided not to change the system under which only a small "death grant" is available to bereaved parents.

The firefighter, 21, was killed in February when the roof of a Co-op store in Bristol collapsed as she went in to see if shoppers were trapped. Her family has set up a trust fund for the rehabilitation of firefighters in her name.

The decision by ministers also means that the common law wife of the Gwent firefighter Kevin Lane, who died fighting a fire two days earlier, will not receive a pension. Although she was the

mother of Mr Lane's 10-year-old son, they were not married and she therefore does not qualify to receive the benefit.

The wife of a colleague, Stephen Griffin, who died in the same blaze in February, will receive full pension rights. Both men had entered a blazing house at Blairstown believing that a child was trapped inside.

Ken Cameron, leader of the firefighters' union, denounced the decision as "miserly and unfeeling". Referring to expressions of sympathy by John Major after the deaths, Mr Cameron said: "So much for the fine words of the Prime Minister when the 'selfless bravery' he refers to is rewarded in a manner which is more suited to the last century."

Ministers have told the joint pension committee for the fire service that proposals to change the system so that relatives other than wives and husbands can benefit from pensions, "should not be taken any further".

A separate compensation scheme administered by a joint union-management committee, paid the £950 to Ms Lombard's parents. This scheme recognises common law wives so that both the partners of the Gwent firefighters will receive £85,000.

In a letter to Mr Cameron, Baroness Blatch, Home Office minister, said the firefighters' pension arrangements were generous compared with private-sector schemes.



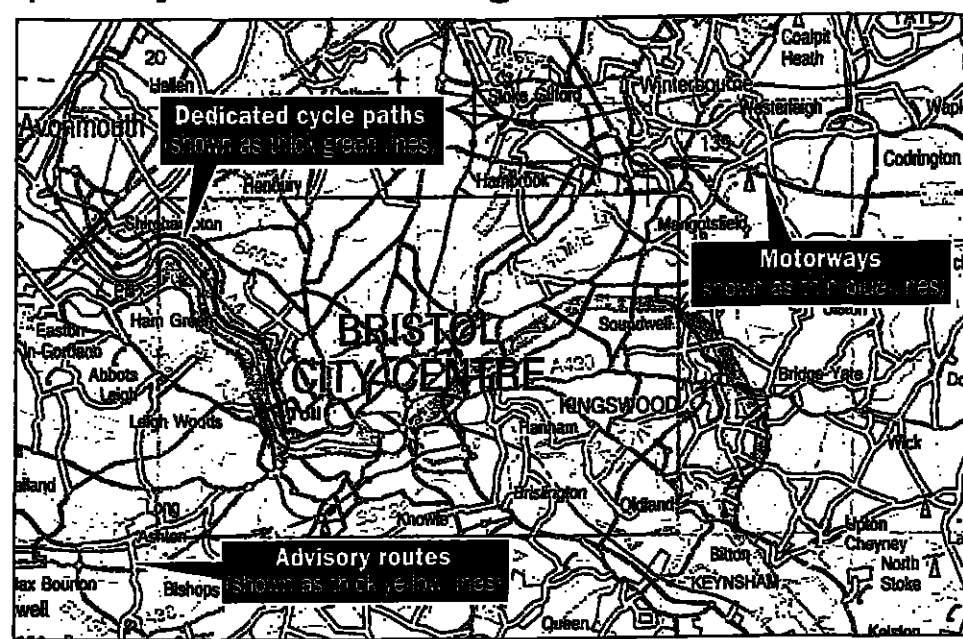
Fleur Lombard: Killed on duty

Cycle guides: Computer techniques used to highlight pathways and cash in on growth in 'green' transport



Fast track: Cyclists on the Bristol to Bath cycle route

Photograph: Christopher Jones



Detail from the cycling guide to Bristol which gives priority to cycle routes above roads

Redrawn maps put age of the car into reverse

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The first in a series of local maps, based on the Ordnance Survey series and specially designed for cyclists, has been published in an attempt to cash in on the growth of interest in environmentally friendly forms of transport.

In a reversal of priorities which will give any motorist mistakenly using them apoplexy, the maps give prominence to the best routes for cyclists. Therefore, the thick green spur running from Bath to Bristol dominates the map as it shows the pioneering cycle path built by Sustrans, the group now developing the 6,500-mile national cycle network. But in contrast the M5 and M4 motorways are almost invisible thin blue lines, because they are as use-

less to cyclists—who are barred from them—as the canal tow-paths are to juggernauts. It is the first time the Ordnance Survey has used the sophistication of its computer mapping techniques to reverse the road hierarchy.

As Martin Whitfield, who has devised the maps, said: "Britain is criss-crossed with an abundance of byways and lanes on which cyclists should be able to avoid the worst of the traffic. With normal maps, they might well not see what the best route is."

Mr Whitfield researches all the routes on his bicycle before working with the Ordnance Survey to produce the maps to his requirements. He says: "It takes about 300 to 400 miles' cycling to cover the area of one map. I received a lot of suggestions on the best local cycling routes from local cyclists, and

then checked every single detail personally."

His work took about three weeks of cycling round the area: "You can't do lots of miles every day because of having to stop and make notes."

The first map covers Bristol, while those for Oxford and East Kent are in production and should be published next month, although a theft of computer chips at the Ordnance Survey's Southampton HQ may delay production. Future maps will show the planned Sustrans network across the country and Mr Whitfield is confident there is a big market for his maps: "Interest in cycling is growing, with more cycle paths and cycle routes being developed."

□ Bristol cycling map, from CycleCity Guides, 3/4 Ziegler, Clevedon, Somerset, BS21 7EL, £4.95.

MPs back Redwood's return

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major is being urged to bring John Redwood back into his Cabinet by senior Conservative right-wing MPs as part of a Cabinet shake-up to sharpen the party's campaign for the general election.

The pressure for Mr Redwood—who challenged Mr Major for the leadership—to be given a Cabinet post is coming from some of the officers of the 1922 Committee of backbench MPs, which advises Mr Major on backbench opinion.

David Maclean, a right-wing Home Office minister, and David Curry, a hard-hitting left-of-centre local government

minister, are also being urged on Mr Major for promotion to the Cabinet.

Douglas Hogg is fighting for his career as Minister of Agriculture after criticism of his handling of the European Union negotiations on beef. Mr Major has protected him from backbench sniping, but Mr Maclean is seen as the best replacement if Mr Hogg is sacrificed.

Mr Maclean was offered the agriculture post in the last reshuffle, but turned it down to stay at the Home Office.

The Prime Minister has privately made it clear he intends to resist the pressure for Mr Redwood to return to the Cabinet. Bringing the former Secretary of Wales back into the

Cabinet would be a high-risk policy, resurrecting the criticism that Mr Redwood made of Mr Major during the leadership contest.

The MPs believe that Mr Redwood would be able to give the Cabinet a more right-wing appeal, particularly if he was given the post at the Treasury in charge of reducing public expenditure currently held by William Waldegrave, who survived the Scott inquiry report.

Since going on to the backbenches, Mr Redwood had built up a following outside Westminster and shown himself capable of out-playing right-wing competitors, such as Michael Portillo, while remaining fundamentally loyal to the party.



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news

Mountain deaths: Avalanche victim is named as Easter weekend walkers get safety warning

MP renews call for climbers to have insurance

STEPHEN GOODWIN

A climber who fell 1,000ft to his death in an avalanche in the Scottish Highlands was named yesterday as campaigners renewed their calls to get climbers to take out rescue insurance.

Kevin Wilson, a 42-year-old plumber from Acomb in York, was climbing on Crag Meagaidh, Kinlochleven, on Thursday when he is believed to have been swept off a ledge near the summit of Pumpkin Route.

His companion, Richard Harrison, 32, a company director of Dringhouses, York, suffered an ankle injury and was carried off the mountain by members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team.

The Scottish Office yesterday issued a warning to climbers and walkers to take extra care this weekend as most peaks are still covered in snow and affected by icy winds and blizzards.

Mr Wilson's death in the mountains – the seventh climbing death this winter – has led to renewed calls for climbers and hillwalkers to have compulsory rescue insurance.

The Labour MP Bill Walker, an ardent campaigner, said "it seems only logical that the user should pay and not the taxpayer". Mr Walker, whose Jayside North constituency includes a large slice of the Grampian mountains, added: "Insurance doesn't guarantee you will be rescued. It guarantees you will be capable of meeting the cost."

He envisages money passing from the rescued climbers' insurers to the Exchequer and back to the police and helicopter services. In Scotland, there are some 900 volunteers in 24 civilian teams, plus two RAF teams. RAF or Navy helicopters are involved in some 60 per cent of rescues.

Mr Walker says volunteers in the rescue teams would not be working alongside anyone paid any more than now, but the taxpayer would be spared some of the cost and rescue facilities could be improved.

However, many volunteers are fiercely opposed to any commercial intrusion and the military helicopter crews value the "live" training.

But Mr Walker's campaign has been given a new platform. The Scottish Affairs Select Committee has opened an inquiry into the mountain rescue service, with insurance one of the key issues. Announcing its inquiry, the committee declared 1993 to be "the worst year on record, rescue teams saved 317 lives but 62 were lost". Last year there were 34 fatalities.

Alfie Ingram, secretary of the Mountain Rescue Committee for Scotland, is contemptuous of MP's wasting taxpayers' money on the inquiry. "The present system works well and is very cost-effective," he said.

"The whole insurance thing has been pointed out to be totally inappropriate to the British scene. I was hoping they had rather seen the light by now."

Most climbers and walkers do take out insurance when they go abroad. The basic rescue and medical cover offered by the British Mountaineering Council costs £44 for up to 17 days or £97 for a year.

Whether any charge is levied varies widely. In the Swiss Alps a helicopter pick-up would trigger a bill of typically £2,500 and the climber is unlikely to get out of the country without paying. In France and Italy there might be a bill but you probably would not be pursued. And in Austria free rescue used to be the norm but can

no longer be taken for granted.

However, the Mountaineering Council for Scotland has told the committee that search and rescue provision is peculiar to the terrain of each country. In Scotland it often means protracted searches across wild land in poor visibility where teams of volunteers are the only practical means.

Mountaineering groups in England and Wales have also protested to the select committee over any move to introduce compulsory insurance.

Doug Scott, vice-president of the British Mountaineering Council, regards it as a knee-jerk reaction by "misguided and alarmist" politicians.

"As climbers, if we are to live our lives to the full, we must never allow our freedom of choice to be narrowed, whether it be by government agencies or commercial insurance companies," Mr Scott said.



Scottish avalanche victim: Kevin Wilson, who was swept off a ledge Photograph: Pick of York

Tory defector told to expect no favours

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Labour leaders said last night they would not intervene to ensure that the Tory defector, Alan Howarth, was given a safe Labour seat in South Yorkshire.

Senior Labour sources said it was not within their gift to force a candidate on the Wentworth constituency and strongly denied trying to ease Mr Howarth's passage into the seat, which has a 22,440 majority.

Local activists protested after Mr Howarth threw his hat into the ring for the Wentworth seat.

Local party leaders suspected he was putting his name forward with leadership backing, but the row is almost certain to mean he will not now be selected for the seat.

However, he is a highly rated asset by Tony Blair in the campaign for the general election, and the leadership must be hoping that another Labour constituency will come forward to give Mr Howarth a home.

The former Conservative MP for Stratford-upon-Avon seat was used by Labour last week to try to persuade more wavering Tory voters in the Staffordshire South East by-election to

swing behind the Labour Party.

A consistent critic of the Government on social policy, Mr Howarth is widely respected in the Commons, but he may have to retire from Westminster, if he does not win a seat. Unlike Emma Nicholson, the Tory MP who defected to the Liberal Democrats, he is also rated by Conservative MPs.

Under party rules, the National Executive Committee could only impose a candidate if there was a dispute, which was not the case in the Wentworth constituency.

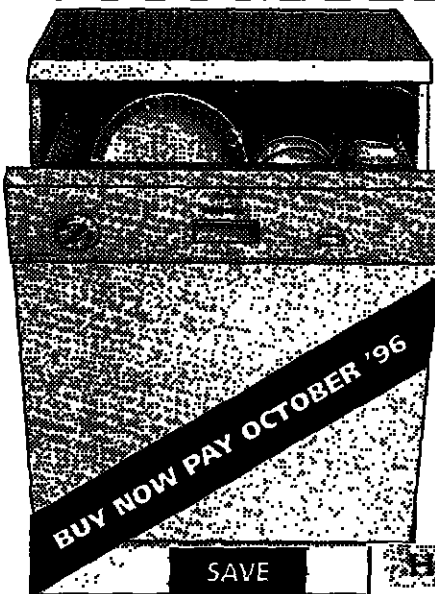
If there was a constituency without a candidate when a general election was called, the NEC could impose a shortlist, although the final choice rests with the local party.



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Scottish Highlands casualty list

Seven people have fallen to their death in the Highlands this year.

1. Kevin Wilson, 42, fell 3000ft from Crag Meagaidh.
2. Fraser Ross, 37, a schoolboy, fell 250ft from Spurr nan Clieach on the Isle of Skye.
3. The Dutch climber, Jacobus van der Vliet, fell 1000ft at the Observatory Gully on Ben Nevis.
4. Paul Bell, 36, fell 1,000ft from Castle Ridge, Ben Nevis.
5. A Frenchman, Alain Fretet, 34, fell 400ft from Castle Ridge, Ben Nevis.
6. Darrin Wilson, 22, fell 600ft from Spurr nan Clieach.
7. Paul Porter, 42, from Surrey, fell 2800ft from Aonach Dubh.

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Gentleman hermit with bombs on brain

TIM CORNWELL
Missoula, Montana

Six years ago Joey Youdarian knocked on the door of a remote hillside cabin with a census form in his hand.

He sat and talked for nearly three hours with the man in the cabin as he jotted down the formal answers on his age, income and employment. Mr Youdarian, a Vietnam veteran, remembers a single room about 15sq ft, a wood-burning stove, a bunk bed, and the two volumes in a stack of books that caught his eye: Shakespeare and Thackeray. The conversation ran from Vietnam to the vegetables that Ted Kaczynski was testing in his garden. "He was quiet, polite, well spoken, quite articulate. He didn't seem like a radical or anything," said Mr Youdarian. "Somebody that had found a way of life that they enjoyed, that didn't have to worry about people bothering them, just getting away from the pressures of life."

Mr Kaczynski was held in a Montana jail yesterday charged with possessing components of a bomb while agents from the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms continued sifting through his sparse home. For Mr Kaczynski is thought to be the Unabomber, the man who, for 18 years, hyp-

notised America with a series of bombings across the country.

Investigators now believe that one of two manual typewriters found there may match the manuscript of the Unabomber's rambling 35,000-word manifesto and letters sent to the US press. Officials said they had all been typed on the same machine, apparently to prove their authenticity. Fearing booby traps, explosive experts were X-raying everything in the cabin before they touched it. An FBI source said. But they have already found a partially assembled pipe bomb, and 10 binders full of writings and sketches of bombs with logs of apparent experiments, according to court documents.

There were books on electrical circuitry and chemistry along with pipes of galvanised metal, copper, and plastic, and chemical ingredients for bombs.

But it was the typewriter that offered the first substantial link to a string of bombings over two decades that have wounded 23 people and killed three.

Agents waited yesterday for the results of a laboratory analysis on the machine. Mr Kaczynski has not been charged in connection with any of the attacks. Bombs were sent to university professors, airline company chiefs, and others that the Unabomber singled out for

leading the hi-tech revolution he viewed as an assault on personal freedom and "a disaster for the human race".

His personal history bears an uncanny resemblance to the suspect's profile drawn up by the FBI. White, male, and aged 53, a highly intelligent, Harvard-educated mathematician, he dropped out of a teaching job at the University of California at Berkeley to scrape a living in a remote hideaway. But neighbours in the small town of Lincoln, Montana, stuck stubbornly yesterday to their memories of a gentlemanly hermit.

"I don't believe it," said Irene Preston, 84, who played pinochle [a card game] regularly with Mr Kaczynski in the 1970s, soon after he first moved to Montana.

He helped her collect wood after her boyfriend died, she said.

"He was always good with us, he never spoke out of place, never hollered," Mr Kaczynski had lived in Lincoln since 1971, neighbours said, but it was only 10 or 12 years ago that he bought his land about four miles outside the town of about 1,000 people.

He built the cabin himself. It was about two hundred yards off a partially paved mountain road, and had no running water or electricity. He would

leave the town in the winter, catching the Greyhound bus on his way to visit home to Chicago, though his mother later moved to New York.

He is thought to have spent time in Salt Lake City, where one bomb was found in a university classroom in 1981 and another exploded behind a computer store in 1987. But he appeared in town in all weather riding a rickety bike. He hitched lifts to Helena, the state capital 40 miles away, with the Lincoln Stage, the mail delivery truck. "He'd go there and pay his taxes and do the business he had to do," Dick Lundberg, a driver, said. "I've known him for at least 20 years and he gave no indication of having adverse feelings against anyone."

Yesterday Mr Kaczynski was under a suicide watch in Helena's Lewis and Clark County Jail. Mr Youdarian, in 1990, is the only person that locals say was ever invited inside the cabin. By that time the Unabomber is said to have carried out 13 attacks that had killed one person and seriously injured several others, but Mr Kaczynski talked mostly about saving carrots and cabbages from the frosts. While he looked like he cut his own hair, he was much cleaner than the unkempt, bleary-eyed suspect seen on Wednesday.



Under guard: Theodore Kaczynski is escorted into a federal court in Montana

Photograph: Reuters

"He said we shouldn't have been in Vietnam, but he didn't get carried away or anything," said Mr Youdarian, who runs a small beef jerky business. "It was real interesting to talk to him. He lived up there alone, but he didn't seem lonely."

The FBI began its surveillance of Mr Kaczynski's cabin several weeks ago after his brother David reluctantly went to the bureau after finding papers at the old family home with marked similarities to the Unabomber's writings.

The area was so remote that one watcher reportedly observed a cougar stalking and killing a deer. But yesterday some agents complained bitterly that they were forced to move in early after CBS reported they were about to execute a

search warrant. "I'm sure that continuing surveillance would have given us the strongest possible case. We didn't have that luxury," one said. The network yesterday insisted it had held the story for two days at the FBI's request.

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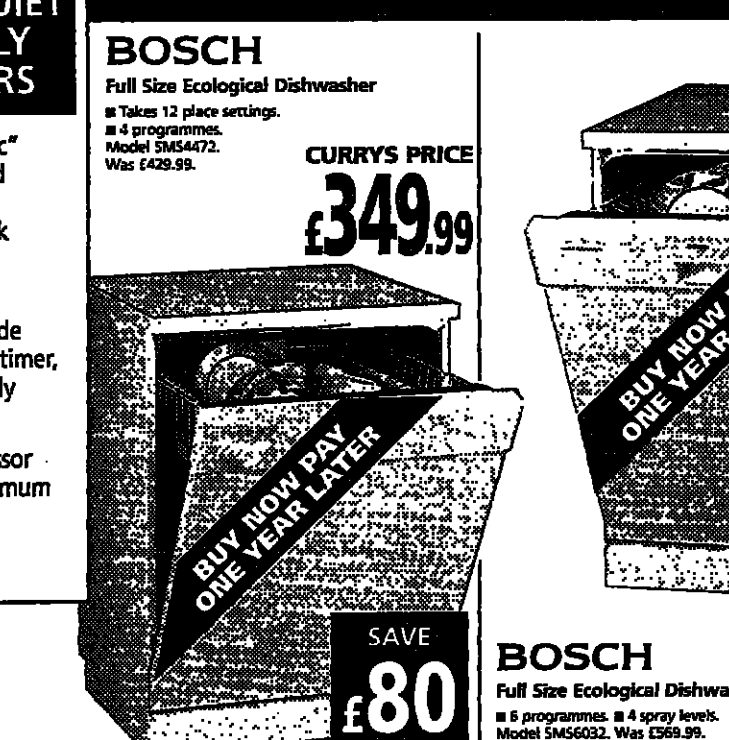
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War alert as North Korea scraps peace

JU-YEON KIM
Associated Press

Seoul — South Korea put its military on a heightened state of alert yesterday following North Korea's apparent dismissal of an armistice agreement.

The move affects primarily military intelligence and other units charged with watching for a build-up of North Korean troops and arms along the demilitarised zone separating the rival nations. No major troop movements were involved and a US spokesman said most of the 37,000 American military personnel in South Korea would not be affected.

"It will have no impact on them, by and large," said Jim Coles, the spokesman for both American and United Nations forces in Seoul. Mr Coles described the move as "an incremental step" that involves more frequent and more intensive monitoring of the North Korean military. The Defence Ministry said it was stepping up intelligence gathering activities immediately in conjunction with the US and UN military command. South Korean air, naval and ground patrols will be stepped up and more troops put on standby.

The Defence Ministry said North Korea's latest action "is an almost complete abrogation of the armistice, and different from its previous moves to discredit it."

"It looks as if North Korea is looking for an excuse to step up military provocation," the ministry said.

North Korea announced on Thursday that it would "give up its duty" of jointly controlling the 2.5-mile-wide demilitarised zone separating it from South Korea.

It said the action was in response to South Korea moving personnel, tanks, artillery and

other heavy arms into the zone in violation of the armistice, which South Korea denies.

Thursday's declaration was seen as the latest step in a series of moves by North Korea aimed at forcing the US to negotiate a peace treaty by proving the armistice ineffective. Last year, North Korea forced out neutral peace observers on its side of the border.

In reissuing its demand for peace talks earlier this year, North Korea said it would make one final move to prove that the armistice is worthless. Washington has rebuffed North Korea's calls for talks, saying it must negotiate with the South. But the communist North refuses to talk with what it calls a puppet state.

The demilitarised zone was established at the end of the Korean War in 1953. The two sides have never signed a permanent peace treaty and are still technically at war.

In Washington on Thursday, the US State Department urged the North Koreans "to abide by their responsibilities under the armistice and to avoid provocative actions". North Korea's statement said its personnel and vehicles would no longer bear distinctive insignia and markings when entering the joint security area at Panmunjom and the demilitarised zone.

Last week, North Korea's vice defence minister accused the South of planning an attack and said that war on the peninsula was only a matter of time.

That statement was reiterated on Thursday by Yang Hyong Sop, chairman of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly, in a speech reported by Radio Pyongyang in the northern capital. "The only issue is when [war] will begin," Yang said. "There is no longer any doubt that war will break out [with an invasion from the south]."

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Child molester asks to be castrated

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

A convicted Texas child molester due to be set free on parole next week is asking to be castrated to cure him of his sickness - and for the first time ever a US state now says it is ready to oblige, and may well agree to foot the \$3,000 (£2,000) to \$4,000 bill for the operation.

This latest twist in a case which has frequently bordered on the grotesque amounts to a complete reversal by the Texas authorities, who had long objected that castration was non-essential "elective" surgery. But on Thursday the state's Board of Pardons and Paroles said that Larry Don McQuay could have his testicles removed, and that it would encourage him to do so.

McQuay is scheduled to be released from the state prison at Huntsville, 70 miles north-west of Houston, on Monday after serving six years of an eight-year sentence for committing an indecent act on a San Antonio child in 1989. But the 32-year-old avowed paedophile claims to have molested 240 children in all.

Last autumn McQuay reportedly tried but failed to castrate himself with a razor. Under normal circumstances McQuay would be paroled on condition he wore an electronic tracking device, at least while he completes the remaining two years of his term.

Supporting the idea of castration, Governor George Bush (son of the former president) said he was "sickened" by the planned release of McQuay. But Mr Bush repeated warnings from medical specialists that castration was no guarantee of a cure. McQuay might still be "a danger to society," and the Parole Board should find some way to keep him in jail.

One option would be to charge McQuay with one of the other offences he claims to have committed. But the legality of such a step is uncertain. Meanwhile controversy over McQuay's demand intensifies. A group called Justice For All has raised \$4,300 to pay for the operation. But Howard Ruppel, head of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counsellors and Therapists, said castration was "mediaeval".

Size does matter when the real Mr Bean sits down to eat his greens



Big is best: John Maish, of Helensville, New Zealand, with giant New Guinea beans he grew in his back yard. The largest is over 2 metres long

Photograph: Brett Phibbs

Chirac relives Lebanese dream

ROBERT FISK
Naqoura, Southern Lebanon

A loudspeaker crackled and Chirac's Own, the 340 Frenchmen of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, snapped to attention. The President of France had arrived to salute his tiny contingent in the Levant, so small they do not even have a band. A series of tiny marching songs (circa June 1940, or so it seemed), came from the loudspeakers as the unit whom the French Defence Ministry would most like to disband, but whom President Chirac refuses to withdraw, received the honour of France.

So tiny is the French contribution to the peace-keeping

force in Southern Lebanon that the UN call it merely the "French Component". But their presence here over the years since 1978, during which they boasted a battalion, cost them 26 dead, losses, if the French are to be believed, who were "martyred" for Lebanon. There lies the rub. The 240 French soldiers in Naqoura, logistics specialists, transport drivers and the like, represent a French dream: that France maintains its "presence", that sometime in the coming years the people of Lebanon will wish to seek France's protection once more and return to that mythic relationship of love and loyalty which Paris believes existed under the 1920 French mandate.

Mr Chirac's intentions were clear as he stood in front of the memorial to the French dead. France stood ready to guarantee the sovereignty of Lebanon after a Middle East peace, he said. France would continue its long, traditional friendship with Lebanon. French troops along the Lebanese-Israeli border? Was that what the French President was offering in the aftermath of a Middle East accord which more and more Lebanese suspect will never reach fruition? Or French military security for Lebanon, if a new peace agreement is to be coaxed from the ruins of the old?

Two hours earlier, at the Maronite Patriarch's Palace at Bkerke, north of Beirut, he

had promised the frail Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir that France would support Lebanon's integrity as a sovereign state and added - Damascus please note - that although the Lebanese war had ended five years ago, "more humiliating is that it [Lebanon] loses every day a little more of its identity, of its dignity as an independent sovereign country." There are 22,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon and Mr Chirac seemed happy to reflect Christian anxiety about their presence.

But the Christian Maronites who are supposed to be France's allies had forgotten some of their traditional politeness when President Chirac arrived at Bkerke.

"Aoun was yesterday the honour of France," a man shouted of the rebel Christian Lebanese general who fought the Syrian Army in 1989 and then sought sanctuary at the French Embassy in Beirut.

"Today he is the prisoner of France," General Aoun lives in exile outside Paris, on condition he does not engage in political debate, a promise that he has repeatedly broken. "No elections under occupation," a banner that was held by another Christian, referring to this year's parliamentary elections, told the French President.

But Mr Chirac thought differently. The Christians must be masters of their own destiny, he said. They should participate in

their country's election. They should vote.

At Naqoura, in Israel's occupation zone, he was presented to a party of schoolchildren whose teacher embarked on a long speech of love for France. The President's eyes swivelled with irritation towards his Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette who was forced to stand and watch this loquacious friend of France speaking for longer than the President had addressed his own troops.

No wonder they seemed happier at the UN cocktail party afterwards, where Chirac's Own helped him to chilled champagne in a garden above the Mediterranean. Here, surely, was *la mission civilisatrice Française*.

IN BRIEF

EU heads for new members by 2000

Budapest — Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, said yesterday that talks aimed at enlarging the European Union could begin by early 1998, writes Adrian Bridge. Concluding a two-day visit to Central Europe, he told Hungarian leaders that they were on course for accession talks, which could be concluded before the year 2000. He had earlier delivered the same message to the Czech Republic. "I don't think that all the candidates can participate in the first round [of talks]," he said, implying that other countries will have to wait longer.

Belgian sentenced

Brussels — A former Belgian defence minister, Guy Coene, tried with seven associates on charges of fraud and forgery, was given a two-year suspended sentence and a fine in Belgium's highest court yesterday. He was accused of illegal use of taxpayers' money. *Reuter*

Chinese border row

Vladivostok — The head of a commission overseeing the demarcation of the Russian-Chinese border resigned in protest over plans to turn over Russian territory to China. Major General Valery Rozov said the transfer "harms the national interests of Russia." *AP*

Comaneci to wed

Bucharest — Nadia Comaneci, 34, the athlete who captured the world's hearts with perfect 10s at the 1976 Olympics, is to marry US gymnast Bart Conner, on 27 April in a giant palace built by the deposed dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. *AP*

Zhirinovsk stands

Moscow — The ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsk was registered yesterday as a candidate in Russia's June presidential election. *Reuter*

Noble tomb found

Cairo — Czech archaeologists working at Abu Sir, south of Cairo, have found the intact tomb of a nobleman from the 6th century BC. *Reuter*

Crime solved fast

Brussels — Belgian police quickly solved two street robberies after victims described the culprit's two outstanding features — a bright yellow jacket and a plaster cast around one leg. Officers caught the 30-year-old only 15 minutes after he stole a purse. *Reuter*

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US 'secretly agreed Iran arms for Bosnia'

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

President Clinton tacitly approved large-scale shipments of Iranian arms to Bosnia from early 1994, despite the United Nations arms embargo, and in defiance of his administration's own policy of isolating Iran as a funder of international terrorism and sworn enemy of the United States.

The charges were set out yesterday in a long front-page

article in the *Los Angeles Times*, detailing a scheme which even at the time was strongly suspected by US allies, including Britain and France. In a carefully worded reaction, the White House said the US had all along observed "the letter of the law and the requirements of the UN Security Council resolution." But officials privately acknowledged that Washington was aware of the shipments. "Were we in a position to stop them? Not really. And

was there sympathy for Bosnia here? The answer is, yes."

According to the newspaper, quoting US sources, an arms supply route was mooted by President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia early in 1994, after previous shipments of Iranian arms to Bosnia had been blocked in September 1992 following strenuous objections from the Bush Administration.

In early 1994, after the deal to set up a Muslim-Croat Bosnian federation, Mr Tudjman is said to have approached two senior US diplomats, Peter Galbraith, Ambassador to Croatia, and Charles Redman, then Washington's special envoy to the Balkans. They said that the US would not protest - in diplomatic parlance that they had "no instructions" on the matter of Iranian arms shipments. President Clinton reportedly was "directly" involved.

Thus deliveries began, continuing until January this year, after the implementation of the Dayton peace accords. With the tacit US approval, the *LA Times* said, the operation "grew into a large and well organized effort operating through Turkey and Croatia, supplying thousands of tons of small arms, mortars, anti-tank weapons and other light equipment."

The deliveries may moreover have had a crucial influence beyond Bosnia itself. The Croatian government siphoned off up to 30 per cent of the arms, using them to help drive Croa-

tian Serbs out of the Krajina region in 1995 - changing the balance of the conflict.

And that is not the only irony. In previous US Government covert operations - above all Iran-Contra - the CIA was almost always among the villains. This time, if the *LA Times* account is correct, the intelligence agency blew the whistle on the operation.

Kept out of the initial secret, the agency inevitably detected the pressure in Congress for findings on the White House, but a special intelligence oversight review cleared the Administration of any wrongdoing.

Furthermore, the Clinton White House was turning a blind eye to a major violation of the UN arms embargo - and one which European governments including Britain and France had also quickly detected and complained about - at the very moment it was desperately lending off powerful pressure in Congress for the embargo to be scrapped.

Air crash victims to be flown home

EMMA DALY
Dubrovnik
and AGENCIES

On barren grey peaks soaring from the sparkling blue water of the Adriatic, the brilliant white tail of a US military jet marks the spot where 35 people died on Wednesday afternoon. Then, thick cloud obscured the hillside, blinding the pilot to the fact that he was flying parallel to his proper course until it was too late.

Yesterday, in bright sunshine, US helicopters hovered above a base camp close to the wreckage, winching in containers with the remains of the victims, who included Ron Brown, the US Commerce Secretary. One woman, a crew member, was found alive in the tail section but died on her way to hospital.

But US sources said most of the bodies were disfigured beyond recognition; they will be flown today to Dover air base in Delaware, so that forensic experts can determine the identities of 33 Americans and two Croats.

President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, who declared yesterday a national day of mourning, was expected in Dubrovnik today for a farewell ceremony.

A team of 26 US investigators sifted through the debris - most of the fuselage was shattered on impact - searching for an explanation, their difficult task compounded by the absence of a black-box flight recorder aboard the jet.

"The plane appeared from the clouds like a ghost. We said

to one another, the plane must be lost, it won't fare well," said Ana Duplica, who lives on the coast road in the village of Plat, at the foot of the peak. "After it disappeared again into the fog we heard a loud noise as if he was taking off," added her husband, Miho, suggesting that the pilot had tried to climb out of danger. "The sound changed - and then nothing."

From the testimony of local villagers, it seems the plane flew in a straight line, parallel to the coast, to three kilometres north-east of the correct pass, which is marked by radio beacons in Kolocep, Lokrum and Cavtat.

The pilot contacted the tower to say he was over Kolocep and descending normally; but instead of passing Lokrum, he flew over Gornji Brat, a village three kilometres inland and eight kilometres from the crash site. "It flew right over us," said Luce Basic, who returned to her home in the war-damaged village only three weeks ago.

"It was much louder than usual - when the planes are landing at Cilipi [airport] they go much further out towards the sea," she added. "We are really sorry, it's a great tragedy."

In Srebreno, which lies between Brat and Plat, it was the same story. "The normal flight path is on the far side of that hill past the church and straight on - instead, it came overhead," said Anto Kristovic, a cafe owner. "The engine sounded unusual," Mr Kristovic said, but the fog was so heavy he could barely see across the road.

Mr and Mrs Deplica were inside their house, which has terraced balconies facing the sea, but went out in the rain to investigate the roar. "The noise was unusual," Mr Deplica said. "I came out and I saw the plane, its wings and engines climbing back into the cloud." Normally, said the couple, aircraft fly between two small islands off the coast and over the Cavtat beacon.

In Washington, a sombre President Bill Clinton planted a tree at the White House yesterday to honour Mr Brown and the 34 others who died.

Mr Clinton and his wife, Hillary, shovelled earth around a blossoming white dogwood tree set in a grove filled with ivy and white and yellow daffodils on the White House South Lawn.

"Last year, as we prepared to go to Oklahoma City, Hillary and I planted a dogwood tree here in honour of the public servants who lost their lives there," Mr Clinton told reporters.

"This year, as we prepare to go back almost a year later, we're planting, sadly, another tree in honour of Secretary Brown and all the public servants of the United States and the citizens who lost their lives in the plane crash," he added.

In addition to Brown and the six-member crew, the victims included 12 US businessmen, 12 US government officials, a European development bank official, a *New York Times* reporter, a Croatian interpreter and a Croatian photographer.



Serb grief: Mourners at the new graves of Bosnian Serbs whose bodies have been exhumed from a mass grave at Mrkonjic Grad where 181 were killed in a Bosnian Croat offensive last autumn. Photograph: Reuters

Serbs unearth 181 bodies in mass grave

Belgrade (AP) — A mass grave in northern Bosnia exhumed over the past two weeks contained 181 bodies, including those of women killed in their nightgowns, a Serb who took part in the exhumation was quoted as saying yesterday.

All but one of the bodies, thought to be Serbs killed last autumn, showed signs of violence, Zoran Stankovic, who headed a team of experts dig-

ging up the grave in Mrkonjic Grad, told Serbia's Tanjug news agency.

John Gerns, an expert who is working with the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague was present during the dig and the autopsies, he said. "We filmed all the bodies immediately and in the presence of international observers," Mr Stankovic said.

The Serbs say that the grave

contains the bodies of Serbs who were killed when Bosnian Croat and Muslim troops took Mrkonjic Grad last autumn.

The Muslim-Croat federation returned Mrkonjic Grad and nearby Sipovo to the Serbs under the Dayton agreement. But before they left, Bosnian Croats troops burned and looted many homes.

The victims were mostly civilians, including women, with

the youngest aged 22 and the oldest over 90. Mr Stankovic said. There were also some soldiers in the grave.

Some women were found buried in their nightgowns, he added. Ulija Simic, an official in Serbia's commission for war crimes said he expected the Hague tribunal to react to the Mrkonjic Grad finds. He insisted that they constituted clear evidence that war crimes

were committed in the region. ■ Washington — A coalition of human rights groups asked an American court to make the US State Department and the CIA release their records on the massacre of Bosnian Muslims by Serbs last summer in the town of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia. Srebrenica was the scene of some of the worst atrocities that were committed during the Balkan war.

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international

Discredited Berlusconi set to bounce back

ANDREW GUMBEL
Rome

For a man who has an indifferent record as government leader, who is treated with suspicion by the international community, who has already been squeezed out of power once, is now being pursued through the courts on corruption charges and faces constant challenges from his own political allies, Silvio Berlusconi is really doing rather well for himself.

With a little over two weeks to go before Italy's third general election in four years, the media tycoon-turned-politician is still very much in the driving seat of the conservative coalition that he brought into government last time round. What's more, as the campaign develops, he is making all the running against his adversaries on the centre-left.

According to the last opinion polls that can legally be published before election day (they are banned in the last three weeks), the Freedom Alliance – made up of Mr Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and the reformed neo-fascist National Alliance – appears to be nudging very slightly ahead of its rival coalition bloc, a far broader grouping of leftists, environmentalists and moderate Catholics known as the Olive Tree.

The secret? Mr Berlusconi is producing a fine-tuned, but essentially identical, version of the political platform that catapulted him into the centre of politics in 1994. Vote for me, he says, and I will make Italy as successful as my business empire. I will create jobs, cut taxes, put Italy back on the international map and reform the institutions of state to create stable and durable government.

Never mind that Mr Berlusconi failed to do any of these

things in his seven months in office last time around. Never mind the lack of detail in his programme. Never mind that he and Gianfranco Fini, leader of the National Alliance, present a far more radical right-wing profile than most voters would normally feel comfortable with.

Mr Berlusconi is an able communicator, especially on the television stations he owns.



Lamberto Dini: His party may prove to be decisive

His sun-tanned face and ever-optimistic tone seem to be working. Most remarkably, he has managed to twist all his judicial problems into a political issue: the magistrates are controlled by the left, he argues, and they are out to get him.

The mood in the opposition camp is nervous, if not downright fatalistic. "Berlusconi is so good at playing the victim that it is impossible for us to fight the campaign on his weaknesses: the conflict of interest between his television empire and his political career, his questionable business practices or his links with corrupt politicians in the past," said one volunteer at the Olive Tree's headquarters.

Instead, the dominant issue has been taxation. Both sides agree that the tax system is too

complicated (there are more than 100 separate income taxes). Both agree widespread evasion has to be vigorously combated, both through law enforcement and by overhauling the inefficient and corrupt state sector so that taxpayers feel they get their money's worth. Both sides even agree that, long term, taxes should come down since many households are surrendering 50 per cent of their income to make up for others who dodge payment.

But somehow Mr Berlusconi has managed to persuade voters that there is an argument, and that he is winning it. Without committing himself, he has invoked the US presidential candidate Steve Forbes' call for a flat rate and suggested that income tax could be reduced immediately. The centre-left, meanwhile, has been less flamboyant but more realistic, saying Italy has to get its massive public deficit under control before any promises can be made.

The crunch moment of the campaign was a confrontation between Mr Berlusconi and the leader of the Olive Tree, Romano Prodi, before an audience of small businessmen. Mr Berlusconi was in his own constituency, earning generous applause for every utterance – and for sheer debating skills, he beat Mr Prodi hands down.

So unnerved was Mr Prodi, an intelligent but not particularly incisive or forceful speaker, that he cancelled a second scheduled debate on prime-time television. "It was really painful," admitted the campaign worker. "It seems we are condemned to be right but for nobody to believe us."



Tarnished reputation: Berlusconi with his lawyers in court earlier this year

Photograph: Luca Bruno

What could swing the contest is the performance of the prime minister, Lamberto Dini, who has set up his own party. He has provisionally hitched himself to the centre-left, but he is a conservative by temperament and a former Berlusconi acolyte, and has not ruled out a swing back to the right.

Political sources say Mr Dini's long-term aim may be to supplant Messrs Berlusconi and Fini and form a more respectable conservative bloc. Such a group might be reinforced by moderate conservatives disillusioned with Mr Berlusconi as well as prominent figures such as Antonio Di Pietro, the former anti-corruption magistrate who wants to enter politics but seems unable to decide whose side to take.

Mr Di Pietro, regularly voted Italy's most popular public figure, is another anti-Berlusconi conservative. He has just thrown off a slew of judicial mud thrown at him by supporters of Mr Berlusconi, who attempted to put him on trial for abuses of office, and could yet be considered a compromise choice for government leader or senior cabinet minister if the election produces no clear result.

PEKING DAYS

Where men bathe in milk until it curds

The icy winds have stopped blowing, the buds are opening on the trees – and Spring Madness has taken hold in China. All of a sudden, Chinese newspapers are vying with each other to offer stories about the unexpected aspects of economic reform and the evolution of the country's social norms.

Take the Shenhe Worker's Cultural Palace in the north-eastern city of Shenyang. This previously sober establishment has just announced that it has built a special cage in order to suspend a wolf-cub above the dance floor. The animal will be illuminated by three lights to encourage it to prance about and howl. This "Dancing with Wolves" has the added benefit, said the Yangcheng Evening News, "that the wolf-cub would not demand a high performance fee like a singer". So as not to tire out the animal, it will at least only be expected to dance for one hour a night.

In Nanjing, near Shanghai, the new general manager of the Nanjing Dairy Industry Group has launched an important new venture: the milk bath. Thanks to the new Shanghai-Nanjing highway, reported the Peking Youth Daily, low-price dairy products from Shanghai now have a quick and easy route to one particular Nanjing public bath-house. (Many traditional Chinese homes do not include a toilet or bathroom.)

This bathhouse, which used to offer a Chinese herbal bath, now every morning fills its crescent-shaped communal tub with milk. This is for the men, who pay 38 yuan (23) for the lacteal dunking. Ladies are offered a more private service: for 88 yuan, each female customer receives a bucket containing 5kg of milk. Some Nanjing men clearly feel that a milk bath is a nice way to round off the day; the report says that the bath is not emptied until 2am the following morning, by which time the bath house is presumably well on its way to offering that nose-wrinkling curd cheese bathing experience.

In Shiyuan, in Hubei province, today should have meant manna from heaven for locals, if only the authorities had not got involved. The Shiyuan Xinggan Villa Company had hired an airplane in order to scatter along the main street some 80,000 yuan (\$5,500) in coupons which could be exchanged for cash. In a country where the average annual urban wage is about 3,500 yuan, this was bound to cause pandemonium.

For the past two weeks, advertisements announcing this

redistribution of wealth have been on local television and newspapers. "Pay attention to traffic when picking up the coupons," it urged. One farmer, according to the Peking Youth Daily, planned to travel 30 miles into town, hoping to use this "air-money" to buy fertiliser.

Local officials decided otherwise. They said that today's enterprise would "cause traffic congestion, impair social safety, and incur injury and death", and grounded the venture.

Sometimes the best of schemes go awry. In Xian, according to China Women's Daily, the 25 or so students in one middle school thought they had hit upon the answer to surviving dreary classes. The 12-year-olds had heard that sleeping pills contained morphine "which can stimulate the mind" and bought three or four bottles of the pills, distributing them before the afternoon lessons. "About 3pm, the teacher noticed some students were drowsy," reported the newspaper. As one by one they fell into a deep slumber, the teacher realised it must be more than the normal stupor, and before long the class was being taken to hospital.

Meanwhile, in Zhengzhou, Henan province, the Imperial Garden restaurant's attempt to brighten up people's lives has been deemed a "bad cultural tendency". It seemed far from counter-revolutionary when the restaurant launched an "evening tea" service and put up a large banner reading: "Light a lamp of hope in the darkness", a quote from a well-known Taiwanese pop song. Spring Madness among local officials has now judged this to be a highly political act. The local newspaper thundered: "For whom does this restaurant offer such a service with the name Imperial Garden? Here in China, what we are doing is to construct a socialistic market economy. Socialism is the pre-condition." The lamp of hope has been swiftly extinguished.

Zhengzhou's residents will instead have to settle for television this holiday weekend, when Easter coincides with the traditional Qing Ming grave-sweeping festival, and today's birthday of Guanyin, the Buddhist idol of compassion. The China Central Television (CCTV) film channel should have people gripped. It offers a programme of films today including *Snip Man*, *Love's Blood*, *Life Filled With Twists* and, for those who last until midnight, *The Fatal Tattoo*.

Teresa Poole

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Gregory Peck

John Lyttle meets the last of Hollywood's noble men: page 3

THIS EASTER WEEKEND WHY NOT...

MAKE A Trip to the Races

The traditional Easter Monday start to Sunbury's flat racing season puts first-time race-goers on the inside track with free admission for under-16s, free ice cream for kids and free doughnuts for everyone else.
 Sunbury, Middlesex (01932 782292). Club £15, Grandstand £10. Silver Ring £5, under-16s free. Gates open 11.30am, first race 2.10pm, last race 4.45pm

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 Rock 'n' Roll Hotline: 0121-454 7020

FIND A Fabergé Egg

Anyone with money to burn who feels like soaking up a little luxury should look no further than the Four Seasons Hotel. A solid gold pendant egg designed by Sarah Fabergé has been hidden in the hotel and for one lucky guest it will be a case of "finders keepers".
 Four Seasons Hotel, London W1. Double room incl. champagne and breakfast: £230/night (0171-499 0888)

GO Kite Flying

As they sing at the end of *Mary Poppins* (Monday BBC1 2.35pm) "Let's Go Fly a Kite". On Sunday and Monday, you can too, along with champions from across Europe and Australia. There will be stalls selling everything from kite-making kits to the latest in sport and stunt kites. A free, fun day out for beginners (expert advice available) or old hands.
 Blackheath, London 10-5pm

WATCH North by Northwest

Hitchcock was a master of claustrophobia, even creating it in a wide open field in this film's most famous scene when a crop-sprayer terrorises dashing Cary Grant. In a newly struck print, splashed up on the big screen, it's sensational. The BFI will re-release *Rebecca* and *Notorious* later this year, so start the Hitchcock revival now.
 Lumiere Cinema, London WC2 (0171-379 3514)

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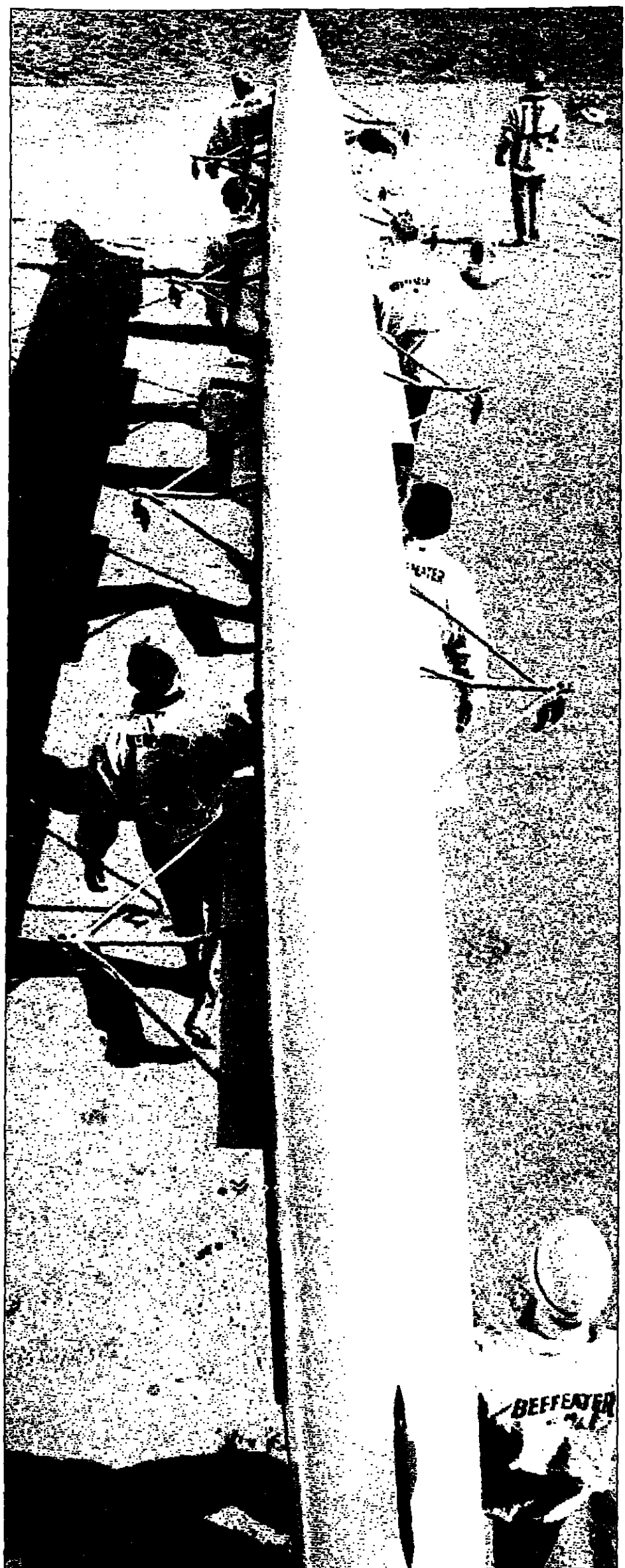
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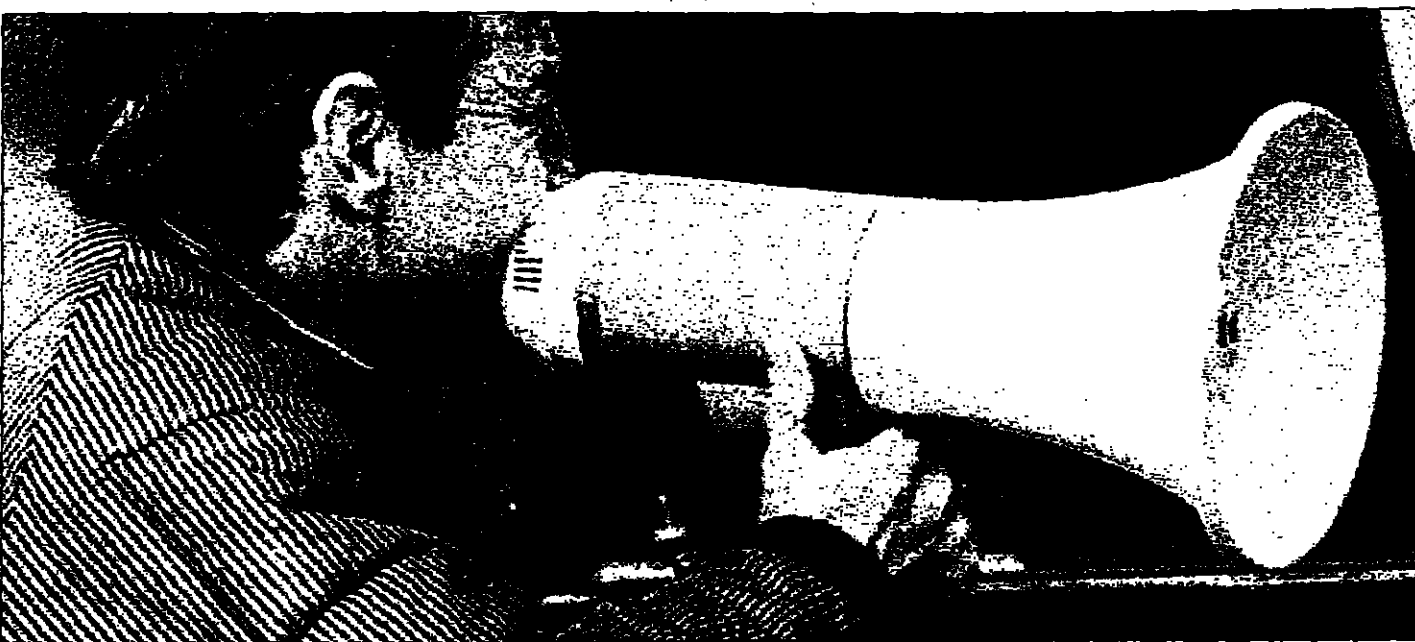
The art of delegation: at the Putney boathouse, Whyman directs the Cambridge crew on to the water. If they win this year, it will be the fourth victory in a row for the light blues



The Oxford stroke, Adam Frost, carries his cox, Todd Kristol, back to the Putney boathouse



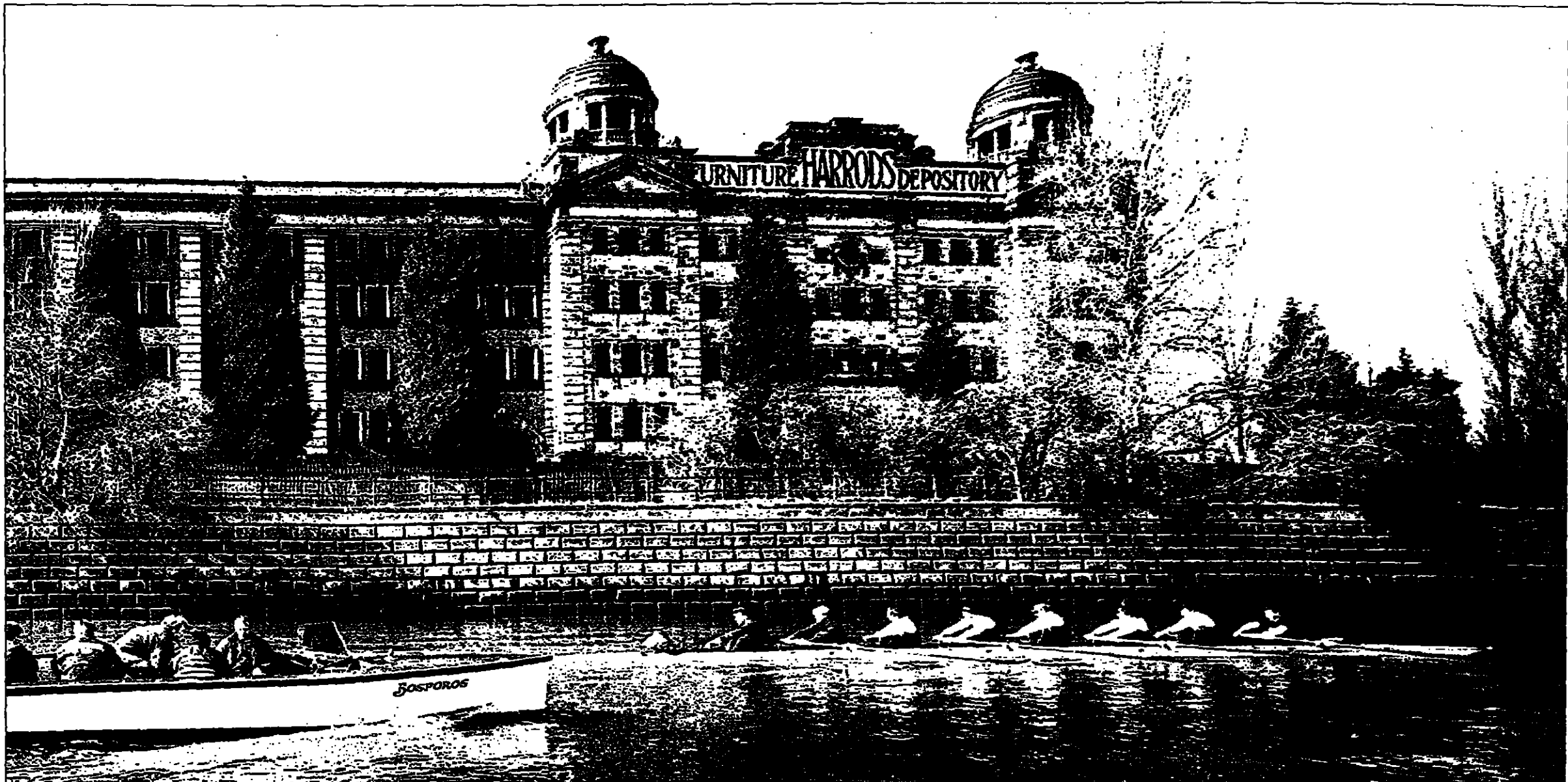
A shade of cool: James Ball, the stroke upon whom Cambridge's hopes are pinned, protects his eyes from the glare and reflects his cox, Kevin Whyman



Dan Topolski, the Oxford director of coaches, shouts encouragement to his crew from the Bosphoros

RACE FOR THEIR LIVES

For most people, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race means having a flutter or taking a trip down a Thames towpath. But for the 16 oarsmen who will set off from Putney Bridge at 3.30pm this afternoon on the gruelling four-and-a-quarter mile dash to Chiswick Bridge, it will be make or break. David Ashdown watched the end of six months' preparations for race No142



The Oxford crew glide past the Harrods Depository a mile from the start. The coaches sit in the adjacent boat. In the two weeks before the race, both crews are out twice a day, taking the course in fits and starts; Cambridge joined Oxford on the tideway after spending a week in a water sports centre in Nottingham. The punishing schedule for the last six months has been six hours a day, six days a week, sustained by the motto: 'Six months' hardship for a lifetime of pride'

April 1996

shopping

One size fashion: an ill-fitting insult to the neglected art of tailoring

By Louise Levene

One size fits all. No it doesn't. Only in the sense that a bed sheet with a hole in it could be worn by anyone. Just because Dawn French and Kate Moss could both wear the same poncho doesn't mean that it fits them.

Yet our faith in the "one-size fits all" philosophy extends to even the most intimate garments: Mary Quant used to make one-size bras; tall leggy women and little plump women are supposed to struggle into the same tights; even condoms are made on the assumption that all men are created equal (when any woman of the most limited experience will tell you that they are not of the kind).

It is apparent to the most casual observer that humans don't come in just one size, yet you always find yourself standing behind people who seem to have swapped trousers with a friend for a bet.

Until this century the concept of sizes didn't really exist. All but the humblest clothes were made to measure, either at home or at the tailors or dressmakers. Not that made-to-measure is necessarily synonymous with made-to-fit - as any bridesmaid will testify. "Homespun", "home-made" and "dressmaking" are still terms of derision, and badly finished, unlined, inadequately pressed efforts can be detected at 50 paces by the trained eye. They always could.

Sick of this often provincial look, the women of America between the wars began to demand elegant mass-produced clothes.

Until the First World War a woman's dress had been an elaborate structure tailored to the torso with countless pieces of fabric and interlining wholly unsuited to mass production. The relatively simple tube shape of the Twenties and Thirties was tailor-made for the evolving industry and its scientifically calculated stock sizes. But the trade still recognised that the best cutting and make in the world couldn't make all size 12 women the same shape; the fitting room was a vital part of the process where a salesperson with a mouthful of pins could make the necessary adjustments - at no extra cost. Labour was cheap.

The future looked bright. Soon we would all be the beneficiaries of affordable, high-quality tailoring. But a parallel trend was one day to wreck this sartorial Utopia: casual wear had begun its relentless slouch from the locker room to the parlour.

In those days, casual meant blazer and flannels, but they proved to be the thin end of a wedge that led to a world that slobs around in its pyjamas all day while catalogues plough through the letterbox promising "easy to wear", "easy moving", clothes with - God help us - "couch appeal".

Who is the real beneficiary of all this ease and comfort? Not the slob on the couch. Every major trend in everyday clothing (as opposed to fashion, which is a different thing entirely) has made life simpler for the manufacturer and retailer. Tracksuits, shellsuits, ethnic dress, Barbour and the lycra boom have all conformed to the one-size-fits-all ideal. Indeterminate sizing and elastic have rendered the normal requirements of fit superfluous. If a shell suit actually fits you, it's time to have your jaw wired.

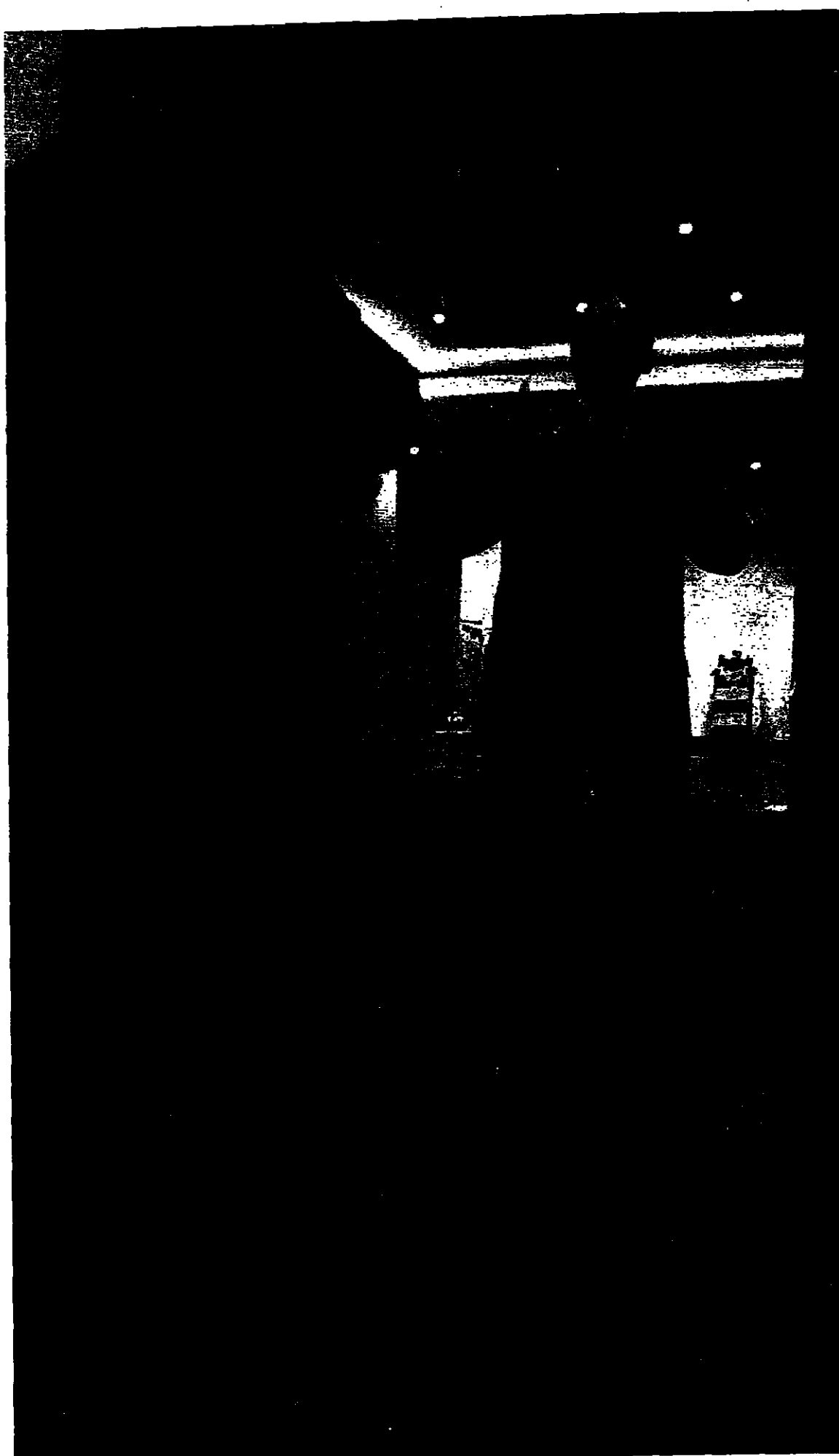
There is only one drawback: unless you are a very pretty little 18-year-old, you will look like a dog in these clothes. As generations of women trudge along the high streets of Britain, their toneless buttocks squidding repellently from side to side in their one-size leggings, the only winners are the manufacturers who saved on labour (no patterns to grade) and the shopkeeper (no sizes to stock).

Why do you think so many dresses are made without sleeves? It's not a conspiracy by homosexual fashion designers to make women over 25 reveal their flabby upper arms to the world. It's a conspiracy all right, but it's a conspiracy by the garment trade to cut costs in skilled labour. Setting a sleeve is a skill, and skills come expensive.

Why do you think there are so many collarless jackets with big shoulder pads about? Because it's a look that enables a gabardine bag with buttons up the front to masquerade as tailoring. The absurd quantities of padding in men's jackets mean that even skinny, pigeon-chested little chaps can affect a heroic, mesomorphic physique - Gary Lineker looks as if he could climb into his jackets without touching the sides.

Such disregard of the vagaries of the human form is bad enough in the mass market of leisurewear, but it is surely unforgivable in those sectors of the clothing business that trade on such words as "design" and "cut" and "tailoring".

Yet even the quality end of the



Mark Powell, bespoke tailor, measures up the menswear at Nicole Farhi

Photograph: Peter MacDairmid

market has its own range of dodges to convince the customer that any shortfall between their size and shape and that of the garment on offer is illusory, irrelevant or even deliberate: "they are wearing them slightly baggy this season madam", "it's designed to be worn with a belt" and (my absolute all-time favourite) "it's bracelet length, madam" - should the gorilla in question have the temerity to ask why the sleeves are so short.

The lesson is simple enough: don't play into their hands. Try it on, take a good long look at it from all angles, bend over, raise your arms and if it doesn't fit, don't buy it.

It is fair to assume that the woman in front of you on the escalator has never actually seen herself from the back. No normal person has a rear-view mirror in their bedroom and no margin-hungry chain store will have wanted her to know exactly what those penny-pinching pedal-pushers

were doing to her backside.

From its heyday as a place where clothes were transformed from off-the-peg to made-to-measure, the fitting room has since become a mere modesty booth where the female customer could check that the size 12 would get over her hips before stepping outside to a chorus of encouraging falsehoods.

"Does my bum look big in this?" she asks. Very possibly, but who's going to tell her?

HIGH AND LOW STREET TAILORING

Are designer labels, with prices to match, a measure of quality? Mark Powell, a bespoke tailor, whose clients include Julian Clary, Bryan Ferry and Naomi Campbell, took Sally Williams on a tour of the West End, and cast a critical eye over the ready-to-wear market.

Giorgio Armani: the women's jacket at £400 is better value than the Armani man's suit for £700 because the styling on the woman's is more innovative. The men's suits are boxy, loosely structured and not that different from styles on the high street which cost a fraction of the price. Armani fabrics are good quality: a mix of wool and silk; and silk and viscose for Spring/Summer. The use of synthetic fabrics no longer indicates inferior quality as both top designers and chain stores use a variety of fabrics. Some synthetic fabrics do fluff up however, as do wools and cottons. If a new article of clothing bobbles, take it back. To test the quality of a fabric, crumple it by hand and check that it doesn't hold creases (linens are the exception to this rule).

Gucci: the cut of the man's suit (£750) and woman's jacket (£500) are both of a very high standard. The two-tone "tonic" fabric of the man's suit is beautiful, but the quality of tailoring on both is very average (the linen suit which costs £650 doesn't even have button holes on the cuff). Gucci, more than any other designer, is very hyped at the moment. You're not only paying for the jacket, you're paying for merchandising, a prime site shop, thick carpets and glossy assistants. It's not worth it.

Nicole Farhi: both the man's suit at £549 and the woman's jacket at £300 are excellent value for money. The silhouette of the jacket is great; the quality of the fabric (lightweight wool) is very high and given that the jackets are manufactured and not bespoke, the tailoring is good. Examine the linings and make sure they are smooth and invisible from the right side of the garment; make sure checks, stripes and cross seams match up neatly; look and feel for flat, smooth seams with well-finished edges; make sure stitching is straight, regular and unbroken; make sure zips work smoothly and lie flat and check that trims, pockets, buttons and fasteners are securely attached.

Jigsaw: at £139 for a woman's jacket and £295 for a man's suit (95 per cent wool and 4 per cent lycra), Jigsaw represents pretty good value. The styling is good, although the quality of the fabric is not exceptional and probably won't wear well. Jigsaw pitch for the here and now and do not tend to have longevity. The tailoring is a bit hit and miss but the clothes are stylish and reasonably priced. You could easily take a Jigsaw silk shirt for £55, stick it in Gucci with a £200 mark-up and people would be quite happy to pay.

Marks and Spencer: the woman's jacket for £90 and the man's suit at £99 (both wool and polyester mix) are very disappointing despite Marks and Spencer's reputation for being good value for money. The buttons on the woman's jacket are too heavy for the fabric and the collar is not lined and so does not lie flat. The man's suit is cheap, but very dull. Styling has improved on the women's wear over the last few years, but men's wear is still very mediocre.

Sally Williams

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Classified Advertising
continues on
page 6.

Want to do something different with sausages?

Don't waste hours with cook books, just consult your computer. Martin Whittaker test drives the new software, Menu Maker

There you are in the kitchen at 5pm, surveying the contents of the fridge in hope of inspiration while hungry children tear around your feet. "How about sausages and cauliflower cheese?" you suggest, knowing it's the best your weary imagination can come up with. "Don't like cauliflower," comes one dismissive reply. "We had sausages last week," comes another. So you reach for the cook books hoping to find something different in there. But ten minutes later, you're still hunting for that recipe as the screaming gets louder.

It's a perennial problem - how to dish up a meal from the ingredients available, given ever-changing likes and dislikes: perhaps a child who's decided she's vegetarian or an adult counting the calories. Now Tricia Bidmead and Jo Stewart, from Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire, believe they have the answer. They have developed a piece of computer software called Menu Maker.

Once installed on a PC you can call up a vast list of recipes. So you want to do something different with sausages? Just click your mouse on the search icon, tap in "sausages", and up come 16 suggestions - toad in the hole, sausages with lentils and garlic, sausage and chickpea stew, and so on.

Tricia and Jo, who call their company Recipe for Success, developed the idea following their own experiences in the catering trade and as working mothers. Tricia worked in contract catering and Jo was a systems engineer with IBM before she took over the running of her parents' country house hotel.

"The chefs there took great pride in changing the menu every day," says Jo. "The downside was that every day when they came in they had to see what food they had."

"They'd say right - we've got monkfish and spring onions - we'll do a spicy fish dish. But then there might be some guests who were allergic to onions, others who might not like it too spicy. In the end it would take them about two hours every day, turning the pages of cook books just to find recipes for the ingredients we had. I thought this is madness - why are we wasting all this time? So I began to devise the system."

It worked in the hotel and the chefs were happy once more. But the two women believed there was a wider demand for the idea both commercially and on the home front.

"We realised that what people needed was a quick and easy way to find a menu," says Jo. So they spent two years researching, trying out and adapting recipes and working on the software. Menu Maker runs on a PC with Win-



Recipe for success: Tricia Bidmead and Jo Stewart with their Menu Maker

dows or an Apple Macintosh. The instruction booklet is encouragingly thin and the women claim it can be learnt in about half an hour.

That claim is fairly accurate to get to a basic standard of use. Then once you're in, you can flick between more than 2,000 recipes. Each recipe card carries a series of boxes giving a list of ingredients, information on quantities, calories and preparation time, and the method.

If you use the search facility and call up chicken, 206 recipes then come up for you to choose between. You can narrow it down by putting in other ingredients, or by specifying a calorie limit, or you can widen the search again. There's also a whole series of codes you can use for example tap in "st" and you get a list of recipes suitable as starters; "fr" will give you dishes suitable for

freezing and "kd" yields a list of food for children.

The recipes themselves are interesting, varying from basic family fare like simple spaghetti, rice pudding, to dinner party dishes like venison with pomegranate, or onion casserole with juniper berries. There are also hundreds of breads, biscuits, cakes, and puddings. Finally when you've found the menu you desire, just print it off and hot-foot it to the kitchen.

Jo Stewart and Tricia Bidmead have also produced a bigger version of the software for commercial use, with more recipes and the facility to amend them.

Jan Joyner is catering manager at Queen Elizabeth Hospital School in Clifton, Bristol. He has to come up with menus for 700 meals a day for the private school's 520 pupils and boarders. He has been using Menu Maker

and is impressed. "The system works very well," he says. "Before we used recipe books, which is a very labour intensive task."

I've found it's cut down incredibly on wastage. Now we can phone up the markets and find out what offers they might have on meat or vegetables. It's good if you've got the ingredients to hand and you're not sure what to do with them. Also there are times when you want new ideas, something quick and easy to do."

But what about in the home? You can't help feeling that it could end up a male toy, inducing men to take a fanatical and temporary interest in cooking just because it involves the computer.

So will it replace the cook books in some kitchens? Susan Pynegar, from Nottingham, thinks so. She has used

Menu Maker for the past month, cooking for her family. "It's great fun to use and I find the system much quicker than using recipe books. Also it's very useful for entertaining - they're very original recipes. I did my Christmas menu from it."

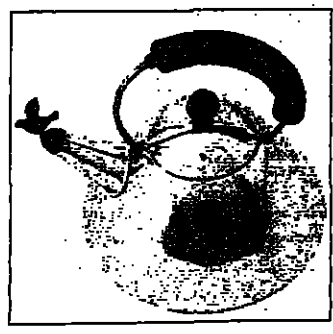
I've got two small boys and a husband who comes in at any hour. And the boys are a bit finicky about their food - I'm not going to eat this or that. My husband is very concerned about losing some weight. With this I can keep a check on the calories."

Menu Maker is available by mail order, price £25 plus 1.25 p.p.o. from Recipe for Success, Greylands, Minchinhampton, Glos, GL6 9BN (01453 731313). A CD-Rom version is to be released in September.

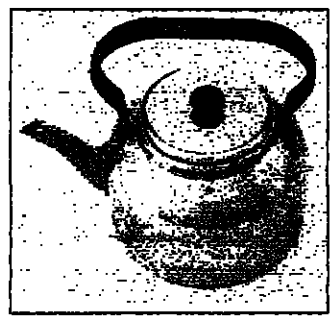
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2 Alessi kettle with bird shaped whistle, £105. Very chic for those who like their designer finishing touches to extend into the kitchen. Available from Harrods, Knightsbridge, London SW1 (0171-730 1234).



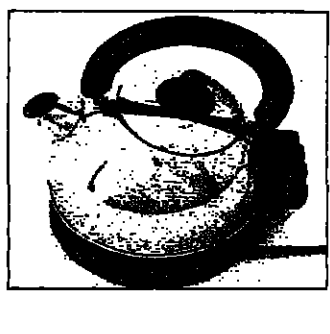
3 Camping kettle, £7.95. Very reasonably priced, for those who like stylish accessories when they pitch tent. The Conran Shop, Michelin house, Fulham Road, London SW3 (0171-581 9692).



4 Whistling kettle, £24.95. A very stylish option, although users should be careful to use an oven glove as the aluminium handle is tempting to pick up. The Conran Shop, Michelin house, Fulham Road, London SW3.



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AUCTIONS

For cultivators of the naif, the latest cringe-maker is the DIY diner kit

With the millennium ticking closer, twentieth century design is a smart investment. Rock age buffs will be heading for the Museum Suite of the Copthorne Hotel, Copthorne, West Sussex, where next Saturday and Sunday (10.30am-6.30pm) the curtains will be drawn and up to 150 juke boxes will be glowing in the half-light in an attempt to seduce buyers.

Like classic cars, juke boxes crashed in price in the recession but are now bopping back. The Wurlitzer 1015 of 1947 - the one with fizzing plastic bubble tubes designed by the legendary Paul Fuller - changed hands for £15,000 five years ago before crashing to £8,000. The 1015 is a classic of what the trade calls the Golden Age of juke boxes, 1939-53, when the records were 78rpm and Betty

Grable draped herself over the warm plastic. More recognisable to today's generation of rockers are Silver Age models of 1953-68 that play 45s and are in chromium plate rather than wood and plastic. A 1956 Wurlitzer Centennial 2000 might cost you £6,000. At the bottom of the price range: the 1970 Wurlitzer Statesman at £400-£500.

Besides jukeboxes, which make up half the wares at this third Classic Nostalgia and Jukebox Show, there will be 30 pinball machines on free play and for sale (£400-£2,000), one-armed bandits (a late Fifties Jennings Indian Head fetches £800), end-of-pier What the Butler Saw machines (around £1,500) and old-fashioned All-Wins with the spring-fired ball bearing that goes bang-rattle-pink. Made between the Thirties and early Sixties,

they are now back in fashion. One dealer who was offering 300 of them for £6 each in the Fifties now has only six left - at £300 each.

One stand will offer only eccentric telephones. For cultivators of the naif, the latest cringe-maker is the DIY diner kit - mushroom stools, lashings of Formica and perhaps a genuine Thirties Coca-Cola refrigerator as supplied by the company to retailers (around £2,000). Further information: Twentieth Century Antique Promotions (tel/fax 01293-822469).

Christie's South Kensington is holding its first Modern Design auction next Saturday (11am). Post-1940 furniture that might otherwise be rubbing arms with pieces by Pugin in South Ken's regular furniture sales, has been whisked into this growing and hotly

contested 20th century market. Last week saw Sotheby's first Design Since 1935 sale: it sold 69 per cent by value.

Among the current 20th century sales, South Ken's has the broadest range: it includes a 1963 Lambretta (£1,200-£1,600) and a 1964 Lichtenstein comic-strip lithograph (£1,000-£1,500).

Best of the rest: at Christie's South Kensington, Friday (11am), autograph letters, including 60 menus from Royal residences signed by prime ministers and celebrities and collected by the Victorian author and traveller Lady Dorothy Nevill. South Ken's ridiculously low estimate of £150-£250 is bound to be exceeded.

John Windsor

A life in the shift of...
Jeanette Campkin, 36.
Avon Lady,
Northampton

People expect Avon ladies to look a bit glamorous, so it's on with the smart cords, a touch of Plum lipstick - Avon, of course, and a bit of blusher. Then, I load up the car with catalogues and deliveries, and off I go.

Evenings or Sunday afternoons are my best times for catching people in. I'm on this new-ish housing estate and an awful lot of my ladies are working mums. I shouldn't say this, but I do think it's nice to see a mum at home with her baby. The best thing about this job is flexibility. You can do as much as you want to, when you want to. The only deadline is the date the orders have to be in by.

I like meeting people and chatting and that's basically what I do. I've been an Avon Lady for four years and I've made so many friends, it's wonderful. I even go to the cinema with a couple of ladies. I've got a number of lonely old ladies who really just like looking at a catalogue and having someone to talk to.

The Embrace range of lingerie for the fuller figure is very popular. I suppose, going in to a shop and asking for a 42EE must be a bit embarrassing. I like to take the children. They are a big attraction. The chocolate and sweets they receive! I usually do my demonstrations in the lounge and my nine-year-old daughter loves my demonstration case and jewellery box full of samples. My son isn't quite so keen. He's six. He'd rather play football. The worst part of the job is going out in bad weather, particularly as I have about 150 customers. Not all of them order regularly. Well you can't expect someone to buy a foundation every time, can you?

I had no training. I was just told to put the brochures through the door and see what happened. I was fortunate. I've done really well. Avon send me a list of customers with each new catalogue. If I ring the bell and it turns out to be a gentleman living alone, I don't give up. Avon do some wonderful aftershaves, shower gels, mini toolkits and car accessories.

I get a lot of abuse from husbands - but only in fun. I turn up for money and they call me all sorts - that's probably one of the funniest parts, actually. I was nearly knocked down by an Irish wolf hound once, but the houses that have got dogs now know to keep them out of my way. There was even one lady who had a ferret.

There are those who throw the brochure back as soon as I put it through the door, which can be a bit upsetting. They just don't realise what's on offer. I get a real satisfaction from converting someone to Avon or when I've suggested something and it really has worked. It's wonderful.

My husband is used to all the Avon boxes around the house. Avon is such a part of our life. Friends and relations all get Avon for all their Christmas and birthday presents. They just laugh. My ambition is to work in PR or marketing - for Avon, of course, but only when the children are older.

Sally Williams

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'Where are the Potters of today?' people asked, even when there was a Potter of today

"Potter: a legacy of swearing" ran a caption in the *Daily Mail* this week. The story it accompanied might have been invented by the paper, it itched so exquisitely at the points where that paper likes to have a good scratch. A playwright who had been, for them, a living affront to decency had brought off one last outrage after his death, a posthumous stab at the delicate sensibilities of Middle England. In doing it, what's more, he had opened the way for a fresh assault on two of the paper's favourite targets, Channel 4 and the BBC. The scripts for *Cold Lazarus* and *Kamikaze*, Potter's last two works for television, are reported to contain no less than 40 "f-words", something of an embarrassment for the BBC in particular, which had made deathbed promises about the

text but had also just announced it was going to watch its language. You could see that the *Daily Mail* would enjoy this new vent for the magma of outrage, but naturally it wasn't reading of the playwright's aesthetic will. He had, it wrote, "lived up to his reputation". The implication was that the language of the plays wasn't a matter of literary need, just a malicious codicil. The *Daily Mail* used both words – "legacy" and "reputation" – as if they were pretty much interchangeable, but their article, and the minor froth about Potter that surrounded it, prompted some thoughts about exactly what it is that an artist leaves behind when they die – what, in a larger sense, is the distinction between a "legacy" and a "reputation".

Perhaps the first thing to be said is that the *Daily Mail* has as good a claim over title to the latter as anyone does. A man's posthumous reputation is a thing of common ownership, shaped by competing tugs and stretches at its fabric. And thanks to the unstinting efforts of the *Daily Mail*, there are many people for whom Dennis Potter's reputation is, undeniably, something like "dirty words man" or "filth storm playwright" – quite as many, I would think, as those for whom (just as unreflectively) his name is synonymous with "great television writer" or "exemplar of artistic integrity". Those who want to defend the gravity of television – its potential for high seriousness – have a strong interest in polishing Potter's reputation, in glossing over the fact that the finest work



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

he did on television in the last five years of his life was that interview with Melvyn Bragg, an encounter in which he appeared to burn his small remaining reserves of vitality with reckless prodigality.

So for supporters the screening of the two last plays is attended with a certain anxiety – will they enhance or damage the reputation? Will we discover that the obituary talk of great wealth was based on paper profits, that the assets were all mortgaged? Already there are little whispers of damage limitation

in the air, rumours that suggest the reality may not quite match the hope, or Potter's own terminal resolution. (I haven't seen the plays yet myself, but it will be difficult to watch them without thinking of the notoriously softening effect morphine has on self-criticism.) In the foreword to the printed text of the two plays, Potter described the works as a "summation" and "testament" to his career. The last word has overtones of the solicitor's office, but the phrase he conspicuously doesn't use is "legacy".

In one sense, though, that is clearly what these two plays are, a final revelation of artistic wealth. And while an artistic legacy can be affected by a reputation, there is also something inflexibly concrete about it, less susceptible to fond memory or wishful thinking. A

complete bibliography of works is much closer to the unsentimental pounds-and-pence tally that you find in the accounts of published wills – the bottom line on a life that will not earn or spend any more. In this respect the executors are still waiting to do their work on Potter's affairs, waiting for the last books to be thrown open.

Without these two works in prospect things might look a little bleak – a good case of a reputation (for influence and artistic example) which is far in advance of the actual legacy. Indeed, Potter's name is mostly invoked to identify the absence of any line of inheritance. "Where are the Potters of today?" people ask, and did ask even when there was a perfectly suitable Potter of today still extant. Look for his influence on television

today and you could end up with little more than the Allied Dunbar adverts ("There may be trouble ahead"), a casual borrowing which Potter, in his savage anti-commercialism, would have despised but which, according to his fiercer critics, perfectly matches his own appropriation of other talents for his own emotional ends.

The screening of *Cold Lazarus* and *Kamikaze* may change that perception yet, may well vindicate those who believe that his reputation should be for ambition, invention and a highly moral sense of mischief, rather than just a childish desire to offend. It won't actually change his reputation as far as the *Daily Mail* is concerned, naturally, but it will make it a bit more difficult for them to reduce his legacy to 40 f-words.

Nights of passion with one really bad, bad girl

Nobody does it for your insides like Sondheim does. And nobody does it for Sondheim like Maria Friedman. By Edward Seckerson



We first noticed Maria Friedman in a show called *Blues in the Night*. Hard to miss her, really. She was the white girl. Very white, very blonde. Hot voice. Well, we thought so: she didn't. "I spent most of the rehearsal period retreating to my dressing-room and weeping. There I was from a background of classical music singing the blues with three black singers whose whole history was gospel and soul. It was in their blood. Hell, what was I doing there? I tried copying them – I tried the scatting, the improvising. Big mistake. Then it finally dawned. Look, I'm a white English girl singing American music. I can only make it musical and heartfelt..."

So there she was, the first preview, nervous as hell, but heartfelt, when this voice from the gallery yells, "Sing, ya bitch!" Back to the dressing-room. More tears. More self-recriminations. But at the interval, co-star Carole Woods is hanging on her door: "Way to go, girl!" Apparently, "Sing, ya bitch!" is right up there with "Diva" or "You're bad" in the compliment stakes. So Maria Friedman was bad, really bad. And that was good. "I'd learnt a valuable lesson: you can only tap into what you have to say, what you've got to offer. I needed to go far enough down the wrong road to bring me very swiftly to the right one."

Which was not, as her parents might have envisaged, the straight and narrow path to a classical career. Her father Leonard (who died only last year) was an accomplished violinist, and you'll find her brother Richard occupying the leader's chair in a number of London orchestras, among them the New Queen's Hall Orchestra. The plan was for Maria to become a cellist. And we're not talking rank and file. But Maria was impatient. It was the old story: her musicality romped ahead of her technical ability. She was, by temperament, a soloist, but in practice she was not about to buckle down to the kind of rigorous regimes that a solo career (to say nothing of her parents) demanded. "I couldn't isolate myself in that way. And it was the means to say it. Actually, it was only when I began working as an actress that I realised what the problem was. I'm very disciplined as an actress, but it's a different kind of discipline. You do a lot of work in your head, a lot of work when you're walking, gardening, cooking, socialising. You are part of the real world, not locked away from it."

So there was the solution: become an actress and see the world. The real world. How's that for a paradox. But then think of the millions for whom Maria Friedman was the social worker Trish Baynes in BBC TV's *Casualty*. When art imitates life, who's to say where one ends and the other begins? But Friedman is a realist. With a secret weapon: her music. She brings her musicality to her acting, and vice versa – the one feeds the other. And it's a potent combination. Watch her as Fosca in Stephen Sondheim's *Passion*, an extraordinary physical performance (and an extraordinary physical transformation – not so very white, not so very blonde) currently on display at the Queen's Theatre. There's an "operatic" quality to her

performance. She has such expressive hands: it's like she's forming the words with her hands, shaping them, releasing them. And the voice: there's so much tension in the line, you feel it could snap. It's dangerous, this highly strung quality. Dangerous but intoxicating. If there is a break in the voice, the ear doesn't hear it: this lady belts into the stratosphere.

"You're right – I don't appear to have a break in the voice. It's a natural mix between chest and head right up to B flat. I'm lucky. I don't have to think about it. I don't have that problem of leaving my chest voice and going into a kind of choir-boy top... it's a muscle that works for me. But, you know, I still don't consider that I have a voice, at least not in the sense that real singers have voices. I prefer to call myself a communicator. The most important thing for me is that it means something, that the thought and word are carried forward on the musical line. I'm not interested in changing the vowel sound – you know, like opera singers do – to make the most beautiful sound possible. I don't mind ugly sounds or shocking sounds. It's more important to me that the sounds reflect my thoughts – so if it's a romantic thought, I'll put more air in the voice. Don't get me wrong, it's not colouring by numbers, but your speaking voice does change according to what you're expressing. So it's the same with singing. And I believe that you should sing only when the emotional stakes are so high that you can no longer speak."

Now there's a remark. Is that Maria Friedman talking, or Stephen Sondheim? Either way, it goes to the very heart of what the "book-and-song" musical is – or should be – all about: the word made song made flesh. And, as Friedman herself puts it, "Nobody does it for your insides like Sondheim does." They first met following a benefit at Drury Lane where she sang "Broadway Baby" from *Follies*. "He found me at the party afterwards and said: 'Who are you?' Not much of an opening line, but I thought I'd died and gone to heaven." She was at the National Theatre in a play called *Ghetto* at the time. Sondheim caught it the following night and, unbeknown to her, lobbied for her to play Dot in the National Theatre's forthcoming production of *Sunday in the Park with George*. She had died and gone to heaven.

And in the words of the song from that show, it was suddenly a case of "Stop worrying where you're going – move on." Nobody does it for your insides like Sondheim, but nobody does it for your vocal cords like him, either. Every number a work-out. Friedman thrives on the muscularity, the complex rhythms, the odd and demanding intervals of his vocal writing. She isn't at all fazed by it, she doesn't consider it un-vocal. I don't suppose it is, if you can sing it. "It all comes from somewhere; there's a reason for every note. It's only problematic if you don't carry the sense, the thought, into the vocal line. You need to be strong, you need a solid instrument, a good range, quick reflexes: the mood might change seven or eight times in one song – you can be saying one thing, thinking another, doing another, all in one phrase. And perfect intonation. Very important. You have to have a good ear for harmony, for where the



The many faces of Maria Friedman: relaxing in her dressing-room at the Queen's; as Trish Baynes in *Casualty*; and as Fosca, the tortured heroine of Sondheim's *Passion*



chords are pulling you. So that, for example, an F sharp flattens to become more of a G flat because the chord is G flat." Singing actress? Acting musician, more like.

Friedman is inquisitive by nature. She asks a lot of questions of her material. You hear it in the phrasing. Singing the song isn't enough, she has to perform it. When she was at school, they wouldn't have her in the choir, but there was this one "mad" music teacher who'd dig out classic songs and pass them round the class like sweets. And once a term, each pupil would get to do their song. Maria's always went down well.

But they had to be the right songs. Just as they have to be the right parts. New work – new plays, new songs – that's important to her. To be up there at the sharp end. She isn't worried about "so-called failures" (and she's known a few), so long as the challenge is really worth the taking. When she put together her Olivier Award-winning one woman show *Maria Friedman by Special Arrangement* (and by fair means and foul, a conspiracy of friends and associates press-ganged her into that one), she was all too aware that every single number, every choice she made, was saying something about herself. This time it really was personal. Sondheim himself gave her notes. One in particular struck home. She had to think of the show as more than a collection of songs, but rather as one song, one great stretch from the first she sang to the last. Is that all?

"You know, I was thinking on my way to the theatre today how difficult it is to get a handle on life – to order it and shape it. But when you're in a show, that's exactly what you get to do for the two hours or so on stage. During that time, you are in control. It's a beautiful way of ordering and crystallising your feelings and sharing them with your audience. I always feel that they're me and I'm them, and we're one. That makes my heart beat faster." Ours, too.

'Passion' is at the Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5040)

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arts

TELEVISION

Eskimo Day (BBC1)

Jack Rosenthal hits the spot with his portrayal of family tensions. By Jasper Rees

Eskimo Day, about parents escorting their children to university interviews, was set in Cambridge because these things always are. Unless they're set in Oxford. WGBH Boston would doubtless have balked at stumping up co-production funds for a script set anywhere else. Just this once Cambridge was thematically as well as financially the logical choice. The rite of passage Jack Rosenthal put his characters through – the moment when parents realise their children don't need them – happens to every family. Locating it at an ancient university strapped an extra load of baggage to the roof-rack.

The two families the drama mainly followed hailed from either side of the Watford Gap, allowing fresh oppositions on the usual subjects: class, education, money. In one dialogue between the fathers, Tom Wilkinson's tyrannical southerner and David Ross's pliant northerner, the tables were beautifully turned: while dad from Blackburn boasted of taking his son to every Rovers' home game, the Cheltenham pater dredged up a memory of chaperoning his daughter to horse trials at 11. "That's just one at random," he blustered, but from that hint you knew it was the only one.

The script carefully posted its various parents at different points on the pH scale of ghostliness, but they all contrived to cause maximum exasperation in their offspring. Only when released from the urge to vent their spleen did the two interviewees, queuing on the staircase together, get to unmask a need for approval. "Do you like Blur?" asked one. "Do you?" came the defensive reply.

You could possibly find Rosenthal in the dock for erring towards the diagrammatic in his portrait of filiality. Among the minor characters, two more young hopefuls were diametrically opposed: a tart girl with a hands-on dad and a vague boy with a hands-off mum. And in the sub-plot about the interviewing don with a parental problem of his own (a satisfying cameo twirl for Alec Guinness), Rosenthal perhaps took his theme that every child turns into their parent a little too literally: how many dons are actually sons of dons?

Cambridge fully justified its presence in a satisfying denouement in which Wilkinson's character's boast of attending the old *alma mater* turned out to be hollow. If this felt implausible, let us not forget Jeffrey Archer's fictional debut as a student of Oxford University. The only Oxford character here, incidentally, was a BA going for an interview as a waitress. Trust the other place to bring a shaft of realism to the cobbled streets of light comedy.

CLASSICAL MUSIC New London Consort

Music for Holy Week, originally intended for a north Italian church, made for a performance of delicate artistry and secure musicianship. By Andrew Stewart



Ringed in the old: the New London Consort celebrate Passiointide according to the ancient rites of Cividale del Friuli Photograph: Jane Baker

It takes considerable faith to transcribe an obscure manuscript of 13th-century religious dramas and then present the results in the near-alien environment of a modern concert hall. Philip Pickett is no stranger to musical archaeology. His latest excavations have uncovered a sequence of works originally intended for performance in Holy Week at the collegiate church of S Maria Assunta in the northern Italian town of Cividale del Friuli, magnificently revived by the New London Consort at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

The emotional heart of Pickett's Cividale discoveries is supplied by two Easter dramas, one dealing with the laments of Mary at the Cross, the other with the visitation of Mary Magdalene to the holy sepulchre. These were framed with a variety of processional hymns, chants and simple polyphonic pieces, performed by a dozen singers dressed austerely in white robes and cowls. A chamber organ, unfussily played by David Roblou, and three handbells provided occasional contrast, while the dramas were done by a small team of first-class solo voices. The whole package was staged with the minimum of props and the greatest dignity.

One could argue without fear of contradiction in this life that the Cividale dramas have never been performed with such delicate artistry and secure musicianship as here, qualities obvious from the first processional hymn "Gloria laus" and reinforced soon after in the beautiful "O crux gloriosa", its sensuous melodic undulations phrased with subtle charm. At the veneration of the cross, the unaffected, folk-song nature of "Pange, lingua, gloriosi" was

established immediately by the New London Consort, immaculate in its ensemble and finely balanced, but also responsive to the hymn's vivid textual imagery.

Simon Grant's eloquent solo delivery of "Velum templi scissum est", a powerful musical description of the rending of the temple's veil and the dialogue between Jesus and the thief, was almost too cultivated and poised to register the full drama of the narrative. I can think of a few slightly seedy priests from nameless parishes who might struggle to negotiate the chant's tricky vocal line but who, by God, would deliver its impassioned words as if they were their own. The soloists in the Easter dramas, singing from memory, offered a captivating balance of tonal beauty and textual expression, with Catherine Bott outstanding as the Blessed Virgin in the "Placatus Mariae". Unaccompanied singing may not be the only test of a good voice, but it surely tells whether a performer can communicate with and hold an audience. Bott's beautiful, intelligent and entirely persuasive account of Mary's grief was genuinely moving, her *mezza voce* control and wide range of vocal colour adding to the intensity of the drama.

Philip Pickett, looking suitably monkish as the ruler of the choir, intervened only as required, offering a downbeat here or elsewhere gently tapping a handbell at a significant moment in the drama. Nice work if you can get it. But then Pickett's efforts had already been skilfully directed into the transcription of the source material and, clearly, into the thorough preparation of his singers.

THEATRE

The Fruit Has Turned... Young Vic

Adrian Turpin watches a postmodern homage to the sitcom 'Dad's Army'

Dad's Army has a lot to answer for. For me, it was a decade of gloomy television as a child and 20 years of mournful repeats ever since. And now, just as the spectre of Captain Mainwaring seemed to have receded for ever, along comes Scarlet Theatre's *The Fruit Has Turned to Jam in the Fields*, a curious postmodern homage to the La Frenais / Clement sitcom.

For anyone who hasn't seen the original (if that's possible), it was essentially *Bilko* with ration books. Mainwaring, a self-important bank manager, leads Warrington-on-Sea's Home Guard in the 1939-1945 war. Sergeant Wilson, Mainwaring's second-in-command, is ineffectual but intrinsically decent, while Wilson's step-nephew Pike, the platoon's youngest member, is an innocent abroad, if not idiot child. What the all-women Scarlet Theatre have done in this semi-devised piece is to take this scenario and reflect it in a series of distorting mirrors. The sitcom's cosy war has been replaced by a vaguely apocalyptic conflict, and Mainwaring, Wilson and Pike have become Mandarin, Winsome and Trout, alter egos of three librarians cut off from the world in what seems to be a country library.

They spend much time leaping in and out of cupboards. They slip swiftly between their sitcom personae and what remains of their pre-war characters. They fantasise about clothes made of Liberty floral lawn and about marrying one another. There's an erotic tussle for a half-sucked humbug. They quote John Donne and talk a lot about being sweet bushes about to be plucked. In short, they digress, then digress from their digressions.

Basing characters on Mainwaring, Wilson and Pike isn't quite as crazy as it first seems. There's dramatic mileage in this trio of toy soldiers – the proud, the semi-detached, the frightened – especially when the librarians' desperate high spirits are conveyed with such gusto as here by Amanda Hadingue, Jane Guernier and Maevae Larkin. But as the play moves from a major to a deadly minor key, energetic charm isn't enough to tie it together. It's like standing by a dance floor watching others lose themselves in music. First you will them on, excited by their excitement. Then you wonder what drives them on. And, finally, there's a sense of exclusion, faced with someone else's secret, imponderable, self-indulgent pleasure.

Young Vic Studio, London SE1 (0171-928 6363) to 20 April, then on tour



'I was raised in an awful place called Brooklyn, New York. I had no trinkets at all'

Barry Manilow looks – close up – like a very young girl who would much rather be out skipping through wild flowers in a spring field than being screamed at by 30 journalists at the Landmark Hotel in Marylebone. Maybe I am being duped. Maybe the moment Barry Manilow is out of sight he stops the fragile bunny routine and starts yelling angrily at his servants. But Barry, I am convinced, is delightful to his very core, and when it all goes horribly wrong and the journo turn against him like a pack of wild dogs, my heart goes out to him. It is Tuesday, and Barry has just announced his intention

to be an ambassador for the Prince's Trust. He wants to help poor youngsters and give them tips about how to get into showbiz.

"I had nothing," he whispers. "I was raised in an awful place called Brooklyn, New York, which was just awful. I had no trinkets at all. No trinkets."

"Poor Barry, no trinkets," I discover myself saying, with no malice. My childhood suffered from a trinket deficiency also (assuming that Barry's definition of a "trinket" is the same as mine – thumbies, little silver knick-knacks and such) but one gets the feeling that Barry would have more of an urgent need for

trinkets than most of us could ever conceive. Barry Manilow is, indubitably, a trinket type.

So, just as I'm catching his eye and giving him a private cheering smile, the barrage begins. Somehow, an unspoken resolution has been made among the press pack – to be scornful of Barry Manilow and all that he says.

"Have you heard of Oasis?"

"No."

"How can you appeal to youngsters if you've never heard of Oasis?"

"Um."

"What on Earth can you offer to young people of today?"

"I just want to go around schools," Barry wails. "Honestly. I mean it. I want to help!"

"And what will you tell them?"

"How to be famous," squeaks Barry. "Phhhwhhh."

At first this mordant nastiness is a welcome relief from the usual celebrity press-conference scenario, which is customarily played out like a tennis match between the Care Bear Bunch, questions and answers volleyed around like little bundles of joy. But today there is an anger in the air, which came from nowhere and is making two people in the room very unhappy: Barry, and a

middle-aged man from *Flicks* magazine, who rises to his feet, surveys the room with a steely fury, and asks his question. "Can I just begin by saying," he snaps, "how marvellous you look today."

A small gasp goes up around the crowd.

"It is lovely to see you," he continues. "Especially looking so healthy and full of colour. This is my question..."

The room falls strangely silent.

"How do you manage," says the man, "to keep so healthy looking?"

There is a long pause.

"Good health and happiness," replies Barry, quietly.

Barry looks at the man for a moment

and they seem to share a common understanding.

"Thank you," says the man. "Thank you, Barry."

And then it begins again.

"Do you honestly see a role for the Royal Family in today's modern society?" asks the man from the *Daily Star*, chuckling quietly. "How can you associate yourself with such an outdated institution?"

An audible gasp is heard from the crowd, now suitably admonished.

"I won't answer that question," says Barry firmly, flashing a sudden gaze of disgust at the throng. "Next?"



A good life, a bad death... Reports of the murder in Cyprus of Danish tour guide Louise Jensen have focused on the brutality of the British soldiers who killed her. Robert Fisk tells her side of the story

Plus: Candia McWilliam on Doris Lessing's new romance

And the great Jackie O sale: Geraldine Norman's exclusive preview

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



THE PLAY CLOCKS AND WHISTLES

THE FILM SMALL FACES

THE MUSICAL LADY INTO FOX

overview

Samuel Adamson's elliptical and ironic debut about twentysomethings and the demands of friendship and sexual identity marks artistic director Dominic Dromgole's departure from the Bush Theatre.

Counterbalancing Hollywood's "Killers in Kilts" view of Scotland (*Braveheart*) comes Gillies MacKinnon's coming-of-age story written with his brother Billy, about three Glaswegian brothers in the Sixties.

Leah Hausman directs Dale Ripley and Louise Gold in Neil Bartlett and Nicolas Bloomfield's intimate musical adaptation of the mysterious novella by David Garnett about a woman who inexplicably turns into a fox.

critical view

Paul Taylor praised its "knowing, allusive comedy... not without blemishes but it's a promising play." "Profound, subtle and full of human insight... sparkles with surface hilarity," cheered the *New Statesman*. "Dromgole has discovered yet another striking, sophisticated dramatist... puts one in mind of Ibsenwood's Berlin," saluted the *Times*. "Little touches that make an already touching and amusing play delicious," smiled the *FT*. "A finely entertaining and notably well-acted production," sniffed the *Telegraph*.

Adam Mars-Jones admired visually accomplished film-making with a "sneaky little family tragedy plot." "Founds of charm, ounces of sharp observation and several grams of wit," declared the *FT*. "Unsentimental honesty... funny and engrossing... very moving." No 1 Choice, *Time Out*. "A finely crafted and powerful evocation of childhood... the MacKinnon brothers clearly write from the heart," heralded the *Times*. "The way it turns from comedy into darkness shows a pretty clear eye," approved the *Guardian*. "A very wonderful film," breathed the *New Statesman*.

Clare Bayley was entranced. "The story is fabulous... In every aspect the production works splendidly." "Peculiar, fantastic, erotic. The music shimmers with unresolved tensions," declared the *FT*. "Gloriously unpredictable... an evening full of both bark and bite... reaches its climax in a scene of quite appalling erotic electricity," sang the *Guardian*. "Splendidly somber and Bloomfield's music is especially beguiling," praised *Time Out*. "So marvellously odd and refreshingly original that it seems ungrateful to grumble," grumbled the *Times*.

on view

At the Bush Theatre, London W12 (0181-743 3388) until 27 April.

At the Warner West End (0171-437 4343) and across the country.

At the Lyric Studio, Hammersmith (0181-741 2311) to 20 April. For tour dates call 0181-563 9293.

our view

26-year-old Adamson's play is a fitting close to Dromgole's rich and memorable period as artistic director. He will be succeeded by Mike Bradwell.

Winner of Best British Film award at last year's Edinburgh Festival with a notable performance from Clare Higgins.

A pungent and powerful cross between a ghost story and a vividly dramatic song-cycle.



Handwritten text in Arabic script: "سنة ١٤١٧ هـ"

Despatches from Dragon Land

Is the travel book doomed to vanish up the Limpopo? Philip Marsden celebrates the vivid diversity of literary voyaging

The travel book is dead. Travel writing once had its place in literature, but no more. Now that we choose our destinations like exotic fruit in a supermarket, we do not need to read about them. Guide books are what's required, not travel books. At some point in the middle of the 1980s, travel writing experienced a great boom in its numbers, stripped its habitat bare, and no amount of scavenging in faraway places could provide it with sufficient nourishment. It died. RIP.

At about the same time, and adding to this fatal fecundity, I helped to edit an anthology of travel writing for the *Spectator*. Now, skimming down the contents page of the book, I can see the position was already clear: "The Lost Art of Travel Writing". "Ruined by the Holiday Writers". "Is the Travel Book Dead?" Yet this last piece, by Kingsley Amis, had been written in 1955; a decade earlier, Evelyn Waugh had also pronounced the end of travel writing, citing the vulgar ease of modern travel.

That some of the century's finest travel books were yet to be published is a gratifying riposte to these two crabby old reactionaries. It is my contention – and there is more than a hint of self-defence in it – that rather than kill off travel writing, mass travel has actually improved it. Forced out of the literalism that spawned it, travel writing has had to try harder, to become more inventive. But going further, finding the most remote places to visit, and ever more bizarre ways to get there, never by itself made a travel book any better.

For me the delight of travel began with Nasa's Apollo 11. A keen astronomer, I was spending every cloudless night with a telescope pointed up out of my bedroom window. I was eight-and-a-quarter and driven less by the spirit of scientific inquiry (I couldn't make head nor tail of the astronomy books) than by the dizzying idea of space. I remember the anticipation of the take-off, the four-day journey, the fuzz of the black-and-white TV. I remember Neil Armstrong hopping about like a bell-diver and a strange feeling of disappointment. It reminded me of a cross between Dr Who and Tintin. The moon landing, as JG Ballard has said, was not what it should have been because we'd all been there before: science fiction had got there first.

The story of literary travel-writing has been one of a similar struggle between wonder and disappointment, between discovery and scepticism. In the beginning it was easy. Accounts of the classical geographers, of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, found a ready audience. The chap-books of 16th-century Europe were full of places where men crept across the savannah with eyes in their chest, airborne dragons filled the sky, and rivers flowed only on Saturdays. No one questioned the veracity of these stories. Creation, it was assumed, would always exceed man's ability to invent it.

With the Enlightenment came a less credulous age and the earth shrank. When the first of the great African explorers, James Bruce, returned from Abyssinia in the late 18th century, his account of the country's excesses – though subsequently proved accurate – was dismissed as a pack of lies.

As a result Victorian travellers adopted a rigorously sceptical attitude. They took with them the baggage of their age – the analogue equipment for measuring things, the Linnaean system for naming them. They wanted to shoot game and save souls, discover places and call them Victoria; they endured fabulous hardships with the coolness of heads. They wrote knowing it was sufficient just to have been to outlandish places, and their books as a result are largely unreadable. In the hands of most Victorian travellers, the poetic myth of the journey was sacrificed for a prosaic record of achievement. A few books stand out from these dry accounts – George Borrow wrote some of them, Kinglake another – his *Eothen* launched the modern travel book. Published in 1844, as a rough-edged account of a Levantine journey, it actually took nine years to write and belies a precise structure, and a wealth of ideas that still seem fresh.

It is a peculiar feature of travel writing that it doesn't travel. Classic travel books in this country remain unheard of in the United States. Theroux and Bryson have had to come over here to do it.



A fascination with the bizarre of the world: a 19th-century interpretation of Marco Polo's arrival at the court of Kubla Khan; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome

Even in Europe, only the Dutch seem to see the point. Why this is so is the source of much saloon bar debate: there is some consensus that if travel is escape, then the English are escaping the strange antics of their class system.

If that is so, it would help to explain the great number of literary refugees in the inter-war years. Lawrence, Huxley, Durrell, Graves were all in some way escaping the bourgeoisie. Whereas many of their forebears found confirmation of their own superiority abroad, this new generation was less convinced. Graham Greene, by his own admission, travelled out of boredom and in search of fear. Evelyn Waugh out of impotency and in search of jokes. These writers as a rule were not good travellers; the rigours of hard travel became less a badge of merit than the source of defensive humour. But their doubts and humanity generally made for much better travel books.

The most enduring of the 1930s travel writers, however, was not a novelist. Robert Byron travelled more like the Victorians, suffering great discomfort and concerning himself with the march of civilisation. His impetus was intellectual; he was always a traveller with a thesis. Now that moving around was becoming quicker (in *First Russia, Then Tibet*, Byron takes one of the first passenger planes to India), the exploration of the links between places grew more important than their physical distance. *The Road to Oxiana* is an attempt to trace the origins of Islamic architecture, but it is not this that makes it memorable. It is the chance encounters, the masterly reconstruction of the ironies and mishaps that characterise a real journey. Like *Eothen*, *The Road to Oxiana* appears simple but is finely wrought; and like *Eothen*, it remains the most influential travel book of its time.

While travel books continued to be published after the war – Freya Stark, Rose Macaulay and Norman Lewis, among others, maintained a steady stream of them – the mid-Seventies saw the start of a new phase. The Sixties had changed everything; travelling had become a mass rite of passage, and it was no surprise that the travel boom was followed by a travel-writing boom; the two have always developed in parallel. But what has been remarkable is the revolution in form. With the linear journey now commonplace, the travel book began to move beyond its borders to snatch corners of neighbouring genres. Journeys were springboards for more or less anything.

Those books which simply report a journey have tended not to survive and the enduring works have been those which are something else. Jonathan Raban's *Coasting* is as much autobiography as travel; Andrew Harvey's *A Journey in Ladakh* is a spiritual quest. Likewise, the past has become another place to explore, and the works of Jan Morris and Colin Thubron have contributed more to an understanding of their subjects than any number of self-defensive and turgid academic tomes.

When Bruce Chatwin died in 1989, Colin Thubron wrote that if there was some feature common to his work, it was a fascination with the bizarre of the world. But in attempting to express it Chatwin found the traditional tag of "travel writer" wildly inappropriate. His travel writing drew liberally on the imagination, and in both *The Viceroy of Ouidah* and *Songlines*, his fiction grew out of his travels. Yet rather than escaping the confines of travel writing, Chatwin simply highlighted its enormous possibilities.

It has been said that modern travel writers are failed novelists, that lacking the imagination to concoct sto-

ries in their own room, they have to go in search of them. To this I would plead: guilty! I would rather have five minutes of a stranger's life than all the books in the world. Room-bound novelists are surely unfulfilled travel writers; works of pure imagination will always pale beside the real world and even Coleridge drew on James Bruce's travels for "Kubla Khan".

The earth is shrinking, fast becoming covered with a sort of patterned carpet of conformity, but it is still very big. True, we can get to most countries in less than a day; true, when we get there we will probably find everyone wearing Reeboks. But this is vicer. The world has not lost its capacity to surprise. It remains possible to be sent reeling by the sudden revelation of another life, by the glimpse of a world unimaginably different from our own. Travel writing, at its best, reflects both the surface of things and their essence, eschews literalism for more abstract truths, and in doing so reminds us not only of man's diversity but also our underlying similarities.

Last summer, in a village on the Russian steppe, a woman was telling me of the life of lies under Soviet rule. "But I suppose governments tell lies everywhere," she sighed. "I mean, did you see those men on the moon? Well, they didn't go to the moon at all you know. They took them to some place and just said it was the moon." And perhaps there's more revealed in that statement than in the whole of the Nasa space programme.

Philip Marsden is the author of 'The Crossing Place: A Journey among the Armenians' (Flamingo) and the highly acclaimed 'The Bronski House' (HarperCollins). An extended version of this article appears in the new issue of W, the quarterly magazine from Waterstones

All you need to know about the books you meant to read
by Gavin Griffiths

PORTRAIT OF A LADY (1881)
by Henry James

Plot: The "portrait" depicts Isabel Archer, a poorish New Englander who is whisked away by her rich aunt to Europe, and into a wealthy and cultured society. Our heroine has élan: she is clever and beautiful and is soon pursued by two "princes" – Caspar Goodwood, an American businessman who personifies "hard materialism", Lord Warburton, an effete English liberal – and a monster: Gilbert Osmond, an American expatriate who loves beauty but has a soul of fiend. He is accompanied by his daughter, Pansy, and the sleeky guesome Madame Merle. Isabel opts for the ogre believing he will make her cultured. Instead he proves to be a frigid collector who imprisons her in good taste. Eventually Isabel realises that Merle is Osmond's mistress, and Pansy is their child. Isabel realises her mistake, but to protect Pansy, finally decides to spend the rest of her life immured with Osmond.

Theme: "A young woman affronting her destiny" (James). If Isabel is free to choose, she is free to choose wrongly. Even her final self-sacrifice is morally questionable. Americans have energy and innocence, Europeans sophistication and art. They speak different languages.

Style: The prose "depends for its effect a good deal on the sound of a voice, painfully explaining... the complication is due to a determination not to simplify and lose any of the by-paths of mental movement" (TS Eliot).

Chief strengths: James is the "historian of fine consciences" (Conrad). James' characters think intelligently about the labyrinth of their lives, but are still capable of getting lost. Isabel begins as a prig but grows through suffering – the pat formula of cheap fiction is well reworked as high tragedy.

Chief weakness: As James explores Isabel's mind, the novel loses its grip on the concrete world.

What they thought of it then: The novel was relatively popular and gave James a glimpse of the fame that he craved all his life.

What we think of it now: Admired rather than read. FR Leavis, no slouch with the crushing put-downs, praised it as "an original masterpiece, one of the great novels of the language". US critics tend to reclaim James by lumping him with the Transcendentalists (whoever they are).

Responsible for: Narrowing the focus of interest in the Victorian novel. James made it respectable for writers to abandon social analysis and concentrate on individual psychology. Fictional characters no longer needed proper jobs; they had feelings instead.

Bonking on the rostrum

Vicky Ward finds Jilly Cooper's orchestral saga troppo adagio for its own good

The most misleading thing about Jilly Cooper's latest bonkbuster, *Appassionata*, is the title. Named after Beethoven's piano sonata it evokes notions of power, grandiloquence, tempestuousness and shuddering orgasms. The Cooper fan is deceived into thinking, joyfully, that after three years' impatient wait it is time once more to revel in the torrid sex-lives of the upper class residents of Rutshire, Cooper's famous fictitious county, where, for three steamy previous sagas, the denizens have enjoyed so many rolls in haystacks, glasses of champagne and competitive backstabbing in the stable-yard, it's a miracle any of them survive beyond 40.

Tragically this is not the case in *Appassionata*. Cooper relegates the horse-riding lustful Rutshire contingent, of whom we are so fond, to the background, foregrounding instead the county's symphony orchestra. The result is a wholesale loss of the *Dynasty*-style glamour that has previously comprised much of Cooper's escapist appeal. Monsoon replaces polo stick and gruff vowels from the North and Ireland take the place of the upper-class nasal twang.

The transformation doesn't work because Cooper can't leave her home territory behind. If she wanted to write a novel about the sex lives of

Appassionata
by Jilly Cooper
Bantam Press, £16.99

musicians she would have done well not to set it in Rutshire on the doorstep of her earlier womanising equestrian hero Rupert Campbell-Black. Instead she tries, unsuccessfully, to merge the two worlds, by over-glamorising the orchestra, exaggerating its importance in the community and turning its members into ludicrous caricatures in the process. Being musicians, rather than equestrian athletes, the only way her male heroes can prove their virility is to bonk and drink their brains out every time the orchestra gets a break from rehearsal. At one point Abby, the heroine conductor asks her lead violinist about the hero, Viking, a French Horn player. "Does he work out?" Answer: "Only how to get the next lay..." The humour doesn't begin to compare with the far more natural political incorrectness of Rupert Campbell-Black's public-school chauvinist narrative. In a Colombian convent he finds the herbal tea so disgusting he is convinced "it's made with Sister Agatha's beard shavings."

The plot too, is strained. Bared breasts, fornication and sabotage have long been part of the stableyard scene but on a conductor's rostrum? When Abby, whom the orchestra members are initially inclined to dislike just because of her sex, accidentally whips off her T-shirt to reveal "a pair of stunning breasts", the situation is too absurd to be funny.

Cooper has already admitted that the sheer size of an orchestra makes it difficult to remember which character is which – an obstacle she hasn't quite overcome since on page 480 June, the flautist, is substituted by an unknown character, Julie. But even the main characters are so thinly drawn that we wouldn't care if they all committed mass suicide, let alone care about a sacked musician. All it takes for viola player Flora Seymour to fall for the man she spends the bulk of the book despising is for him to look after her dog for a few hours. "I misjudged you – you're a sweet guy," she says and promptly falls in love, disingenuously ignoring the class, cultural and age gaps between them.

Strangely, perhaps, the only book's only genuinely moving story-line concerns a young man's acceptance of his homosexuality and embarkation on a gay love affair. Maybe she took a leaf out of Jane Austen's book, because here it seems Cooper delib-

erately restrains herself from writing about what she hasn't personally experienced. The gay sex scene is sensitively written and not overblown.

Alas, the same cannot be said of it heterosexual counterparts. They are cold, trite, mechanical and surprisingly lacking in energy. Clichés such as "This time the metronome never faltered" and "Then she thought of nothing except George" are used to polish off one or two lines of mundane love-making, instead of the customary one or two pages. There is far less distinction between villainous (sado-masochistic) sex and loving sex than is usual in Cooper's work; and of funny sex – Cooper's trademark – there is little sign at all. Many critics detected a certain melancholy weariness about *Appassionata*'s predecessor, *The Man Who Made Husband's Jealous*, but by comparison the latter is a joyful Spring romp. In *Appassionata*, Cooper, one feels, is tired.

For Cooper fans, there is, however, a glimmer of hope. Some of the best chapters centre round the Campbell-Blacks' adoption of two Colombian babies – one of whom, Xavier, is facially disfigured, and an instinctive horseman who is adored by his glamorous father. If she is sensible Ms Cooper will realise she has already created the bare bones of the plot for her next, far better, bonkbuster.



Whenever you're ready to talk, we're ready to listen.

As a nation, we're famous for hiding our feelings. But the country with the stiffest upper lips also has one of the highest suicide rates in Europe. If you find it hard to talk to those around you, perhaps you should consider talking to The Samaritans. We won't push you to say more than you want to and we won't be offended if you hang up. Equally, we'll be happy for you to phone back later. Our number's in the phone book, and every call is confidential. If you're ready to talk, don't bottle it up any longer.

1753 303311. We'll go through it with you. The Samaritans.

Meddling with molasses and tinkering with tea

Britain's record of interference in America is almost as bad as America's record of humbug and propaganda. By Edward Pearce

**A Struggle for Power:
The American Revolution**

by Theodore Draper, Little, Brown, £25

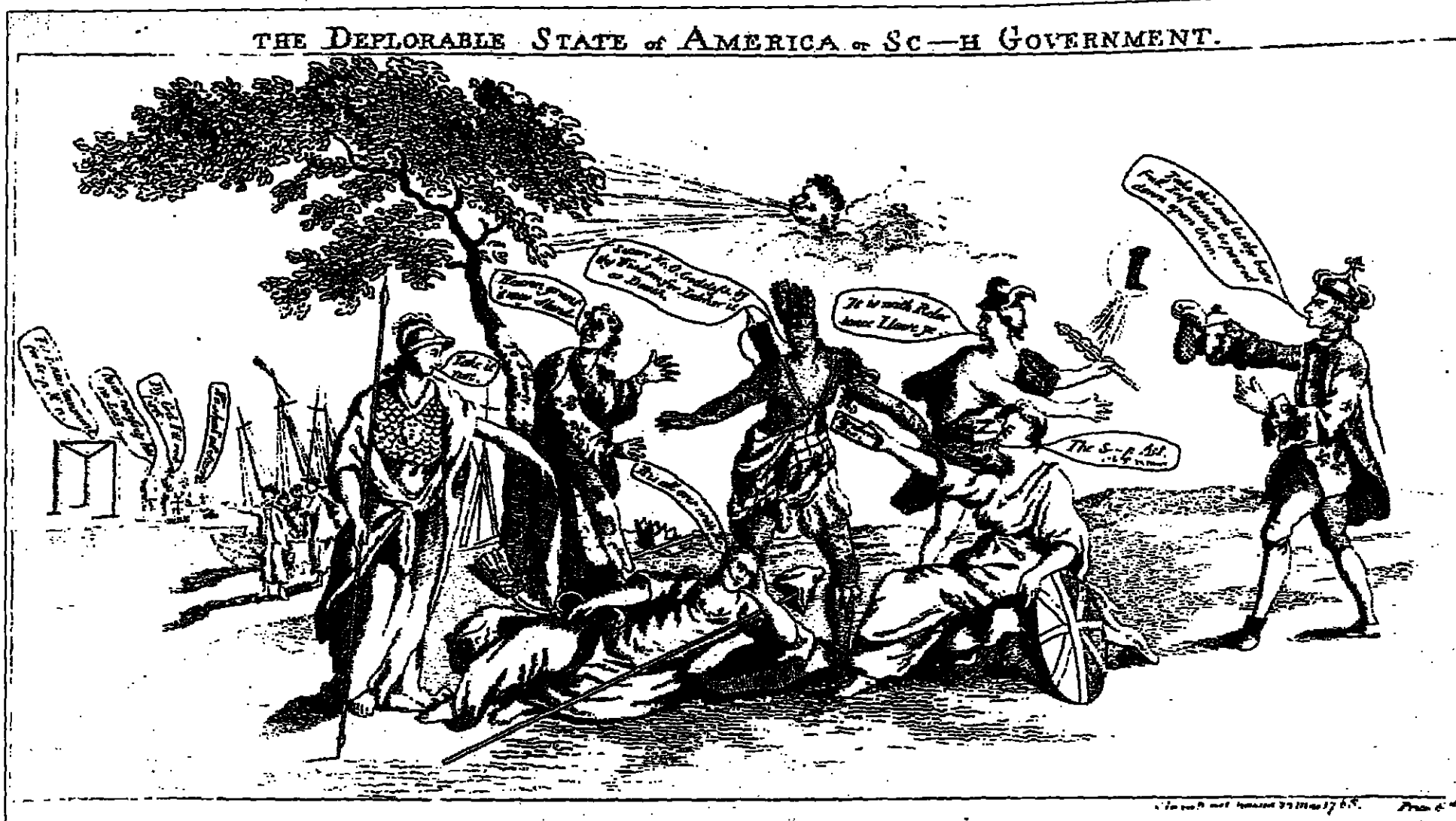
Britain has a sentimental view of the United States, which has a distinctly sentimental view of itself. We have a legend of brotherly affection, briefly interrupted. They have one of heroic liberation from unspeakable tyranny. Theodore Draper's excellent, reasonable and very readable study is concerned with the roots of American Independence. And having read a mass of secondary, but unfamiliar material, he explains. Very roughly, the British, as imperial power across the previous century, had been indolent, self-seeking and wrong about economics – mercantilists instead of free-traders. Also we carried negligence in colonial relations to celestial heights before switching first to unconsidered meddling – the Stamp Act and tea duties – then to blind panic.

The Americans, or rather the key Americans in the key places, were hyperbolic, manipulative provincials like Italian footballers writhing around in search of a penalty. They turned British flea-bites into slavery while black men were whipped in the cottonfields of patriots in good standing. There were exceptions to the complementary awfulness. Lord Dartmouth showed some intelligence on the British side, Benjamin Franklin spent years as a conciliating force. Even so, one puts down Mr Draper's book regretting that, between British fools and American humbugs, they couldn't both lose.

Of course, hindsight tells us that American independence was inevitable and should have happened in the smooth, astute way of Canada and Australia. But the prime American movers for it, with their tarring-and-feathering of opponents and the bombastic self-pity of their propaganda, inspire no affection. Listen to Joseph Warren on "the Boston Massacre": "our streets were stained with the blood of our brethren, when our ears were wounded by the groans of the dying, and our eyes were to be tormented with the sight of the mangled bodies of the dead". (Sounds like Sinn Féin.)

As Draper observes, the "massacre", was the outcome of an exchange of insults between a colonial ropemaker and a British private, a colonial mob had attacked a British sentry, no official order had been given to fire... and a colonial jury acquitted officer and men of the deaths of five people. The event was nevertheless to serve from 1771 to 1783 as an American holy day until replaced by the Fourth of July.

We know too well a sanitised picture of enlightenment America – Augustan prose and sentiments of universal but considered liberty. But how is this for enlightenment? The government of George III had issued the Quebec act of 1774, giving the French Catholic majority there freedom of religion plus French civil law. The first American continental congress in its "Address to the Peoples of Great Britain", expressed astonishment that "a British Parliament should ever consent to establish in that



'Unconsidered meddling': The Stamp Act of 1765 caricatured in the Boston Gazette. Britannia (seated) hands it to an uninterested assembly of Liberty (on ground), Mercury (wealth) and Minerva (wisdom)

country a religion that has deluged your island in blood and dispersed impiety, bigotry and persecution, murder and rebellion through every part of the world."

Another address, directed to the Catholic French Canadians, accused the British of failing to give them their irrevocable rights. The Know-Nothings (anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish, anti-immigrant) were to be a force in 19th-century America. (So were sellers of Brooklyn Bridge.) But against the virulence and dishonesty of Boston orators in the Seventies, Draper sets British colonial government across the century, if it can be called government. High in importance among his sources are the dispatches of Lieutenant-Governors of US colonies. The practice was to appoint as Governor some grand personage, often an absentee, and to leave the toil to a lieutenant, often a former officer, perhaps like Colonel Alexander Spotswood, one who had deserved well through service under Marlborough. Someone who might today have become the secretary of a golf club or found himself, over the second decade of the 18th century, trying to govern Virginia.

His first problem was to get his own salary paid, and as the expense lay with the colonial assembly, he was often reduced to despairing correspondence home. But he was talking to an authority which chose not to exercise itself. For on an informal day-to-day basis, American independence already existed. Only the Board of Trade troubled itself with exercising any control over the colonies and the Board of Trade was sidelined.

But autonomy did not protect colonial interests. Robert Walpole fell from power 30 years before American independence, but his practice shows both the indifference of British government to those interests and its subtle inaction.

Walpole only meddled once. In 1733 he introduced the Molasses Act, a 100 per cent import tariff upon molasses produced outside the British colonies. At this time, the molasses of the French West Indies were sold briskly to New England in exchange for fish, meat, flour and lumber. The molasses were turned to such good account that Massachusetts and Rhode Island were known as the Rum Coast. This trade in

turn financed New England's negative balance of trade with Britain.

The only losers were British West Indian planters, but they were rich and well-connected, also absentee, like those aristocratic governors. Having pull in Downing Street, they used it and got their act. All hell was promptly let loose in Britain, never mind the American colonies. "Liberty, property and no excise" became the chant and Walpole was mobbed in the street.

As for the Americans, the agent of New York, Partridge, described the act levelly, as "divesting them of their rights and privileges as ye king's natural-born subjects and English men in levying subsidies upon them against their consent whom they... have no Representative in Parliament nor any part of ye Legislature of the Kingdom". This just point missed the elegant subtlety of the Prime Minister who had sought to please the British planters by passing the Act and to square the Americans, in an age of generalised and approved smuggling, by not enforcing it.

Such refined cynicism being lost on the com-

mercial element, enormous pressure was exerted on Walpole. And in the way of Oscar Wilde and temptation, he yielded. The Prime Minister observed that "in the present inflamed temper of the people, the act could not be carried into execution without armed force; that there would be an end of the liberty of England if supplies were to be raised by the sword".

The colonies might have been kept longer to be relinquished without conflict had such cool reasoning continued. But Walpole's successors did not have his lucid commercial priorities. Grandeur reared its ugly head.

It would be convincingly argued during the Seven Years War that Britain should retain its conquest of Guadeloupe, richest and most profitable of sugar islands, leaving big scrubby Canada to the French, who always kept the colonists respectful and had already spanked a Colonel Washington sent on a futile mission against a French fort.

Alas, we broke with indolence, opted for grandeur, liberated the Americans from French surveillance, meddled again and everything else followed.

Swizzles, gruntlings and lumber pie

The goofball professor of trivia is getting formulaic, thinks Robert Winder

It wouldn't be difficult to poke fun at the insistent, deliberate and self-conscious triviality of Nicholson Baker's concerns. In four novels – *The Mezzanine*, *Room Temperature*, *Vox* and *The Fermata* – and a mazy work of literary self-criticism (*U and I*) he has marked out a trim but rich plot for himself in the literary landscape; and become something of a cult figure as the goofball professor of the small things in life.

There are times when he seems so gripped by, say, the capillary system on a single leaf that he fails to see the trees, let alone alone the wood, but that, in a way, is the whole point. God, as they say, dwells in the details, and Baker has been able to tease a pedantic kind of poetry from, among other things, the grooves on a record, the hand-brake-like spreader on an ice-cube tray, the significance of a misquotation, and the curious whims of fashion and taste in shampoo marketing.

His new volume of essays – his first – could easily have been called a novel. It is, like his fiction, full of po-faced footnotes and elaborate descriptions of gadgetry. His subjects are the history of punctuation (let's hear it for the semi-colon!), aeroplane modelling, chocolate sauce, the mechanics of film projection, nail-clipping aesthetics, and those loose bites of unprocessed text that gather like sediment at the bottom of a computer-generated manuscript ("...owl and nrtz i, which a plastic bag..."). But the prevailing tone is confessional: his meticulous analysis of the material world is warmed by lots of acute and good-humoured self-examination.

His ideal enterprise, you feel, is to take something in which we have not the slightest interest, and make it riveting – a splendid, risky tactic that usually works. Baker writes with enviable density: his fidgety sentences, anxious not to bore,

The Size of Thoughts
by Nicholson Baker
Chatto, £14.99

glance about them like partygoers who don't know anyone else there. Just when you think he has exhausted the matter in hand, he finds some new swizzle to hold up to the light.

Where he stumbles – as, perhaps, in *The Fermata* – is when he takes as his theme something of automatic interest (sex) and subtracts, rather than adds, excitement. There, his cool appraisal of the mental manoeuvres led him to neglect the heated palpitations of the real thing. And here, in these cool, knowing essays, his eagerness to dignify the oppressed minorities of our existence sometimes leads him to cut grander themes down to size. "We must refine all epics into epigrams," he cries at one point. Big thoughts are only small thoughts in black tie.

Most of these essays appeared originally in the *New Yorker*, and they are certainly strong enough to be let out on their own. The final piece, in particular, is spectacular: a 150-page rumination on the literary and social career of a single word: lumber. In Baker's hands this becomes an exquisite piece of practical criticism featuring Goethe, Shakespeare, Nabokov, Houssman, Virginia Woolf and many others, a canny report on the cultural implications of electronic search methods, a detective story – he hunts down the sources pillaged in a famous lumber-couplet by Alexander Pope – and a cookery book (following a hint from Montaigne, Baker wonders whether his "lumber pie" was not a metaphorical bag of bits and bobs but a genuine dish – "a non-dairy ox-product").

It's a wonderful little book in its own right: the words "Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris" do not often appear on the same page as "Magnavox CD-player (featuring Dynamic Bass Boost Circuitry)". But put together, these essays can at times seem just a teensy bit written to a formula – different ways of making the same point – about the emotional resonance of all those everyday objects we rarely honour with our full attention, Baker is well aware of this.

In "Rarity", written in 1983, he worries about about our preoccupation with the unusual: "Grants committees and arts competitions chew through the applicant pools, funding anything that moves. Contrarians trample one another to buy unfashionable stocks. 'New and Noteworthy' columns take any grunting of an innovation and give it a paragraph, a title with a pun in it, and a close-cropped picture." He concludes by urging us to "pursue truth, not rarity. The atypical can fend for itself." The ordinary, in Baker's world, is easily strange enough.

In a way, it would be marvellous if Baker could bring himself to discuss the big emotions provoked by love, war, death etc with the same inspired diligence, the same refusal to be fooled, that he brings to his enquiries into the metal oscillations generated by modelling glue or the index cards in public libraries. But he is too much the humourist, perhaps, to take himself seriously in such matters.

Self-deprecation, indeed, has become almost a tic. At the end of his heroic tour of the lumber-region, he apologises ("I have over-emphasised minor borrowings... I have overquoted and overquibbled") and you rather wish he hadn't. Surely he doesn't want us to agree with him? In a way it's hurtful: it seemed like great stuff to me, but then what do I know?

A feast of Hibernian hokum

Short on opinions, accommodating to foreigners, a new Oxford guide is still a marvel, says Patricia Craig

What is Irish literature?

According to this *Companion*, it includes novels set in Africa, grammars of written and spoken Japanese, and 17th-century English translations from the French, whose connection with Ireland may all be judged somewhat tenuous. The editor, you may gather, is possessed by a burning desire to be as comprehensive as possible, and indeed he has pretty well got everything in, although there are a few illogical omissions.

The book is arranged, in the usual way of these Oxford Companions, alphabetically, and with entries compiled by a host of contributors. I wish Robert Welch had followed the practice of Ian Hamilton with his *Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Poetry* (say) and identified the author of each piece, rather than trying for uniformity by keeping the whole thing anonymous. He has achieved a consistency of tone, indeed, but at a cost. One of his tasks as editor (he says in the preface) was to purge all the writing of "slack opinion and knowing jargon". What's happened is that the purging has left a scarcity of opinion of any sort.

It's true that one consults an Oxford Companion for facts, not assessment, and you will find many cogent and extensive definitions here – for example, of Hiberno-English, the stage Irishman and the Literary Revival. However, nearly all the entries for individual works, particularly works of fiction, come in the form of plot summaries; and it's disconcerting to detect no critical differentiation between Molly Bloom (for example) and Molly Bawn. The plot summarisers take their brief very seriously and keep a straight face even while describing the role, in Charles Maurin's

Oxford Companion to Irish Literature, edited by
Robert Welch, OUP, £25

The Abigensers, of a lunatic werewolf, a wronged and deadly sorcerer and a batch of poisoned holy communion wafers. And the person into whose hands the Co Cavan novelist Anthony C West has fallen treats this author without once alluding to the most striking aspect of his fiction: its unending preoccupation with women's bums and busts.

The *Companion* isn't at all snooty about its inclusions, and so we find Maeve Binchy ("warm-hearted novels... tinged with nostalgia") along with such earlier exponents of Irish banality as Rosa Mulholland and Annie MP Smithson ("district nurse and novelist"). An obscure historical work by William Buckley, *Croppies Lie Down* (1903) rates a mention, and is oddly described as "painstakingly realistic" when in fact it kills off half its cast by means of battles, duelling, shooting accidents and suicide: the whole caboodle.

Even more puzzling is the ascription of "political feminism" to the author of *The Rape of Patrick McGil*, a lurid novel of 1915 which contains one of the most luckless, witless, passive and ignorant heroines in the whole of Irish literature. Other characters in novels are described as being "defeated by life and time" or "driven to crime and exile to support their ruined families". Many elements of bygone Hibernian hokum are enumerated in these pages.

Some things are considered more than once – for instance,

there's a separate entry for every story in *Dubliners* (some of them paraphrased very ploddingly indeed), an entry for *Dubliners* itself, and then quite properly a four-page entry for Joyce which traces his life and career – but not his achievement, which is covered elsewhere.

A few odd choices seem to have been made: why, for example, do we find under "A" a paragraph devoted to a three-act play called *Autumn Fire*, which no one's ever heard of, but not *Autumn Journal*, for which we're referred back to MacNeice? Why is every novel by Joyce Cary, and not only the two set in Ireland, doggedly outlined? Why should the editor suppose that anyone in their right mind, wanting to read about Elizabeth Bowen, would turn first to Cole, Dorothea (her middle names)?

All the dominant figures of Irish letters are handled conscientiously, and at appropriate length: Swift, Yeats, Shaw, Wilde, Synge, Flann O'Brien, Heaney and the rest. There are useful entries on authors who should be better known, such as Mervyn Wall (a couple of hilarious excursions into medieval Ireland, starring the ex-monk Pursey) and works we've always meant to read but never got round to, like Jonah Barrington's *Rise and Fall of the Irish Nation* (1833).

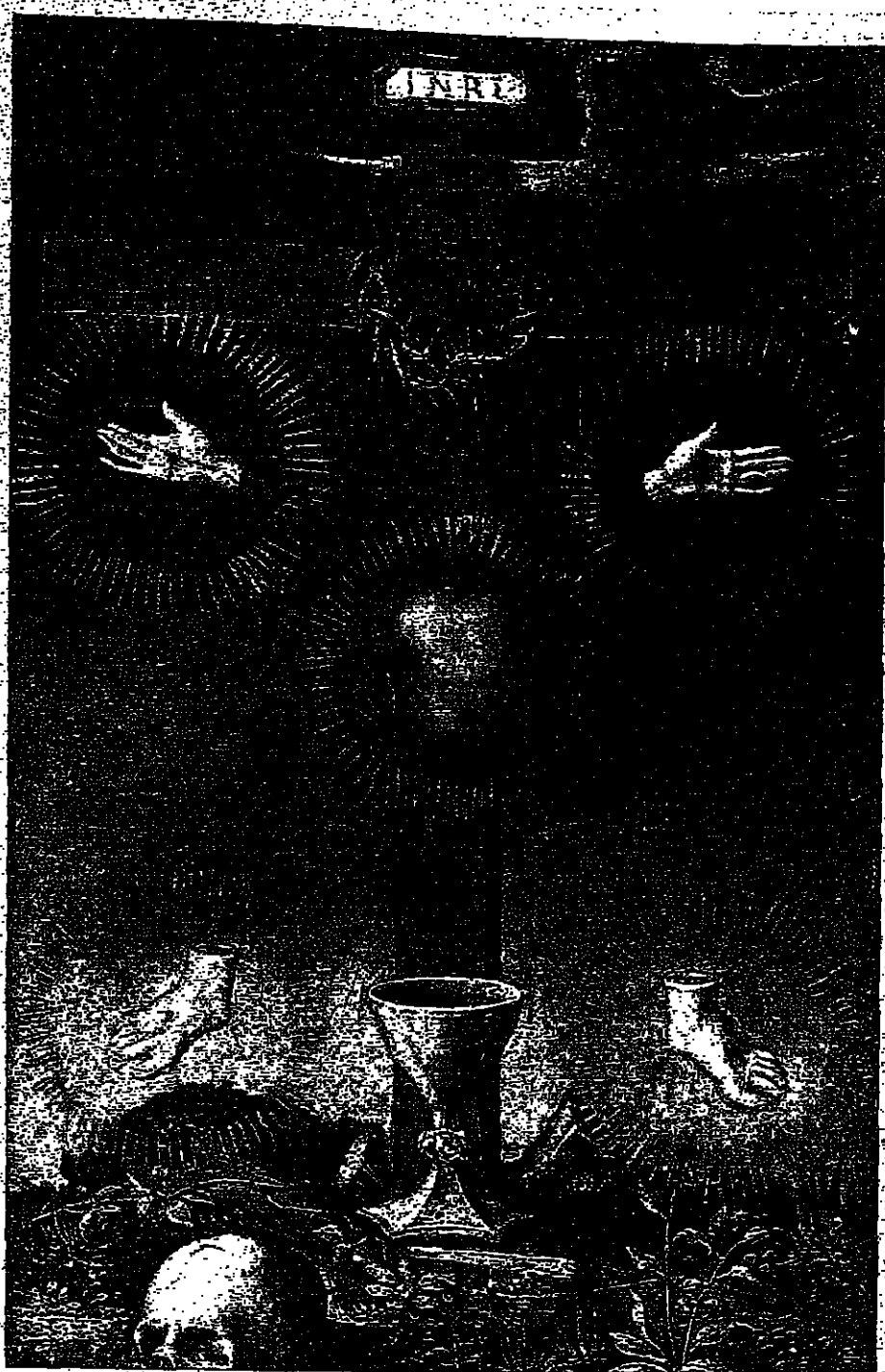
Careful reading will reveal a good deal of insight into the subdivisions of Irish nationalism, and their outlets in literature: for example, in the wake of Douglas Hyde's call for "de-Anglicisation" in 1892, Gaelic Leaguers, literary revivalists and Irish-Irelanders all believed themselves to be exclusively attuned to the national spirit, and took up their pens accordingly. Coming up to the present, we gain an inkling of

such departures as the renewal of interest in the Irish language, historical revisionism and the onrush of bawdiness following the scupper of censorship.

Attention must be drawn to some sins of omission. Synge's *The Aran Islands* is in, quite rightly, but not *Stones of Aran* by Tim Robinson, an extraordinary, two-volume work which adds up to the last word on that pungent island. *Troubles* (1971), the novel that sparked off Derek Mahon's celebrated poem "A Disused Shed in Co Wexford" isn't mentioned and nor is its author, JG Farrell; these are Englishmen, true, but so are John Dancer, Pasternak, Queen Elizabeth I and Wilfrid Scavenius Blunt, for whom a place has been found.

What else? The Glens-of-Antrim versifier Moira O'Neill is described as the mother of the "actress Molly Keane" – though her daughter is properly identified under her own heading as the author of *Good Behaviour* (1981) and its successors. The Gaelic folk song, "Is Fada O Bhaile", is inaccurately cited. And so on. It's easy to single out small flaws and errors of interpretation. However, so much industry has gone into this undertaking that we should be grateful for all it contains in the way of information and illumination, rather than lamenting its defects.

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Invisible messiah: the radiant Five Wounds of Christ disembodied revealed – a striking piece of early surrealism from a Flemish diptych of 1523, commissioned by a Carthusian abbot. It's one of a trove of images from Medieval Death-Ritual and Representation by Paul Binski (British Museum Press, £25), an entertaining study of the aesthetics of morbidity, the imagining of Hell and the wishful portrayal of the Afterlife. Macabre ritual rubs shoulders with a grotesque comedy of manners

Tailors' tales and story factories

A huge novel full of postmodern tricks, of decent widows and local crooks, set in Bombay and satirising Mrs Gandhi. Who does Rohinton Mistry think he is? Salman Rushdie? By Hugo Barnacle

Rohinton Mistry's second novel is a whopper in size – 600-plus pages – but apparently not in substance. He has chosen an epigraph from Balzac's *Père Goriot*: "This tragedy is not a fiction. All is true." There is no need to doubt the claim, since all the elements in the story are familiar from newspapers, history books and documentaries, which is part of the book's problem. The other part is that Mistry takes a slightly more naïve view of the fictional process than Balzac, and assumes that simply re-ordering his anecdotal evidence to provide continuity and tension, and soldering it all together with lots of dialogue, will do the trick.

This works only up to a point. The story deals with two village tailors, Ishvar and his orphaned nephew Om, who come to a "city by the sea", which is clearly Bombay, to look for work. They are taken on by a lovely Parsi widow, Dina Dalal, who has a contract with an export fashion firm. To make ends meet and preserve her fragile independence from her odious brother, Dina also takes a paying guest, Maneck Kohlah, the student son of an old schoolfriend.

It is 1975, Indira Gandhi has just declared the Emergency and India is going to hell in a handcart. Sweeping police powers allow forced vasectomies (or even castration if someone in authority doesn't like you), the bulldozing of slums and the rounding up of homeless people as slave labour for government construction projects. Crooked coppers, landowners and bureaucrats are making fortunes, but poor slum-dwelling tailors, respectable widows and idealistic students face an outlook that shades from dodgy to dire.

Mistry acquaints us with the main characters' family histories, from the time of Independence, in long flashbacks. He has an excellent command of storytelling structure and maintains a high what-happened-next factor throughout. Old-fashioned readability is the book's greatest strength.

He occasionally likes to remind us of this. "Everything happens to you," the waiter at the

A Fine Balance
by Rohinton Mistry
Faber, £15.99

local restaurant tells Ishvar and Om when they return from yet another horrendous misadventure. "It's not us, it's this city." Om says. "A story factory, that's what it is." Again, when the beggar-master tells how he discovered a long-lost brother, Om gives us the nudging appraisal: "It's got everything – tragedy, romance, violence and a suspenseful, unresolved ending."

These post-modern touches are in reality as old as *Don Quixote*, older even, but they nevertheless seem to indicate an effort on Mistry's part to go beyond a recreation of the 19th-century social novel and muscle in on Salman Rushdie's lucrative pitch. A more blatant example turns up in the account of how Maneck's father, a merchant in "a hill station" which we can take to be Simla, lost the family lands. "A foreigner drew a magic line on the map and called it the new border."

The keyword "magic" is unmistakably Rushdieque in this context, and so is the bad history, since Partition was the brainchild of the Muslim League and the complete antithesis of British policy.

The satirical attacks on Mrs Gandhi's regime pursue a similar literary objective, though Mistry is perhaps overlooking the fact that *Midnight's Children* appeared while Indira was still in power. Ridiculing her grandiose rallies, her plans for the "beautification" of Bombay, her latest fascism and the utter corruption of her lieutenants is no longer quite so cutting-edge, and the humour seems weak, except on one occasion when the police carry out a baton charge on a beggar's funeral procession and then apologise, having mistaken the parade of cripples and misfits for a piece of subversive street theatre.

Mistry's characters are more recognisably human than Rushdie's, though they tend to be either goody-good or badly-bad, and those who are meant to be ambiguous simply oscillate between the two extremes. All upper-caste Hindus are portrayed as fiends in human form, dedicated to the merciless and unrelenting oppression, torture and slaughter of their supposed inferiors (a perfectly realistic approach as far as it goes, since the outrages and atrocities in the novel are matters of historical record), but this is one of those cases where truth is stranger than fiction, and within the constraints of fiction the truth seems too lurid.

As a relief from the violence and squalor comes the brief "golden time" when Om and Ishvar, Dina and Maneck live happily, unmolested by the lawless government and its various parasites. (Om even gets rid of a literal parasite, the tapeworm that has kept him matchstick-thin for years.) Mistry's vision is profoundly dualistic. Maneck reflects that "the secret of survival was to balance hope and despair", and his failing is that he cannot do this. "If there were a large enough refrigerator, he would be able to preserve the happy times... But it was an unrefrigerated world. And everything ended badly."

So when Ishvar takes Om home to find a bride, and everything looks tickety-boo, we know there is going to be a ghastly twist of fate. By this stage, Mistry's expert tear-jerking technique has become counterproductive and, as he piles catastrophe upon disaster, it is increasingly hard to keep a straight face; indeed, as Oscar remarked on the death of Little Nell, it would take a heart of stone not to laugh.

We are not helped by the pompous, lumpy metaphors, like the refrigerator image above, which proliferate weirdly towards the end. But the book is entertaining and instructive, in the best 19th-century tradition: perhaps especially instructive to us British, as we plunge towards the state of Third World beggary that awaits us in the new millennium.

A swagger, a wink and a tomcat's daughter

Melissa Denes is entranced by piracy, moved by school reports and repelled by a breast fanatic in three first novels

The pirating epic is not an obvious choice for the first-time novelist: too remote, too romantic, too *Treasure Island*, it doesn't promise much in-depth analysis of the post-modern condition of humanity. And yet Alison MacLeod's *The Changeling* (Macmillan, £15.99) – which nods to Robert Louis Stevenson rather than Thomas Middleton – is much more than an adventure story for grown-ups. An odyssey which begins in Co Cork and ends (temporarily) in the West Indies works a strange magic, evoking in the reader that enthusiasm for the "New World", and for discovery in the large sense, which is at once its theme and its inspiration.

Set at the beginning of the 18th century, *The Changeling* tells the story of Anne Bonny, born in confused circumstances (her mother dies believing her to be the daughter of an over-affectionate real live tomcat), raised in chaos, and

consequently possessed of a healthy appetite for disorder: if freedom is difficult, she confides, there is nothing so bleak as the tidy life.

Her boyhood in Ireland (she is called "Anson" until the age of seven), is followed by an uneasy period as a settler's daughter in America, before Anne discovers sex and the sea – their attractions remain for her mutually bound – and sails for New Providence. When time begins to hang heavy on her once more, she marries Captain Jack Rackham, a gentleman-pirate, adopts a swagger and a wink, and joins his crew on the high seas. Anne Bonny was not born a changeling, but in her flight from permanence and from history, she certainly lives like one.

MacLeod's novel inhabits its period in more ways than one. In true 18th-century fashion, it readily admits of other voices. Rumours, reports and old wives'

tales jostle the narrator for space: there are echoes of Defoe and of Swift's wild, satirical inventiveness. At the same time, nothing qualifies the author's originality. Understated, spare, *The Changeling* issues from the smallest of details – the lack of palm leaves, the heaviness of a sky.

The freshness of MacLeod's imagery makes unquestionably real a world where homes and towns are taken by the sea ("porpoises glinting coppery over the herb garden"), and the outposts of British civilisation come adrift, with "sun-struck old seamen skittering across the beach yelling at nobody".

Rather more contemporary in its concerns is Martyn Bedford's *Acts of Revision* (Bantam, £14.99). Thirty-five-year-old Gregory Lynn returns home from his mother's funeral to unearth his old school reports. As he reads them, and remembers how they were the prelude

to his eventual expulsion, Gregory becomes obsessed with the idea of revision. Thus begins a series of subject-by-subject reveries. It is apparent before the bottom of the first page that all is not well with Gregory, and yet Bedford's anti-hero is not your average literary madman. He is no Wall Street trader with a penchant for designer suits and fancy restaurants – this is a uniquely British Psycho, prowling suburbia with the hood of his jacket drawn tight, watching for signs of life behind the frosted glass.

The want of glamour can prove something of an obstacle. Gregory Lynn is not an aesthete à la Humbert Humbert or Hannibal Lecter, and his unmitigated egotism often makes his world, and his language, as two-dimensional as the cartoons he is forever drawing. A fondness for the subject-verb-object sentence and the repetition of a potted biog-

raphy ("I am an orphan, a bachelor, an only child... I have one brown eye and one green") finally becomes more irritating than chilling. His crimes, too (a fumbled assault, a hostage taken in the school chemistry lab) are not without a certain inevitability. The level on which this novel does surprise and engage is rather quieter and implicit. Its focus is split three ways between the present, the near past (the acts of revision), and childhood. It is in the gradual excavation of a life that's essentially cheerless, save for the very distant past, that Bedford is most affecting. A moving debut.

Robin Laurent, self-styled hero of Alvin Rakoff's & Gillian (Little, Brown, £12.99), deals with grief somewhat differently. When his wife, the eponymous Gillian, is forced to undergo a mastectomy he discovers that (well I never) the breast for him represents all that is good in life. As his wife's condition worsens,

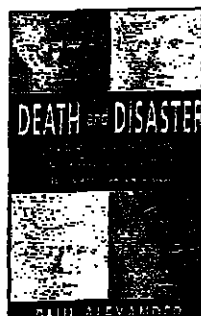
his fascination with young (and invariably willing) flesh grows.

The novel charts the course of a cancer against that of a botched seduction in Paris; the crass misogyny of the latter episode ("I should rape her, she would never charge me") sits uncomfortably with the tenderness for Gillian. She becomes hunched, shrivelled, constipated; it seems a final injustice that Robin should so strip her of her sexuality while flexing his own. On the beach in Portugal, Gillian sits tented by her robe while Robin admires topos volleys: bawling girls, their firm breasts "jiggling, bobbing, shaking, flapping, shimmering, bouncing, bouncing, bouncing." Poor Gillian. Her husband's lust for other women is, it becomes clear, intended as some roundabout homage to her former beauty. It's just as well she dominates the title, because Gillian herself barely makes it on to the page.

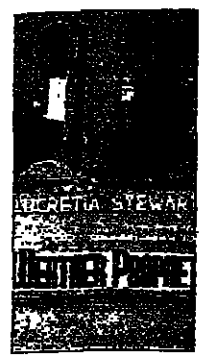
Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

Death and Disaster by Paul Alexander (Warner, £8.99). The title comes from a cheery series of Andy Warhol paintings on suicides, car crashes and assassinations. But it also applies to this book's twin themes: Warhol's demise after a long-postponed gall bladder operation – his fear of dying in a hospital – became a self-fulfilling prophecy – and the frittering away of his \$600m estate through legal wrangling. The dissection of New York's arty and legal worlds is initially absorbing, although the story gets bogged down in detail.

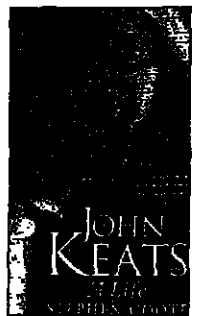


Konin by Theo Richmond (Vintage, £8.99). In 1939, there were 2,700 Jews in the Polish town of Konin. By 1942, there were none. By tracking down survivors around the world, Richmond has produced a luminous account of this doomed community – food, ceremonies, love of learning, even toilet habits – and the resilience of its people following the diaspora. Inevitably, the terrible name of Treblinka lies at the heart of this wonderful book.



The Weather Prophet by Lucretia Stewart (Vintage, £6.99). Ostensibly a travelogue of the Caribbean – a bit about the banana business here, a fragment on the Carib aboriginals there – this is mainly a guide to Lucretia Stewart. We are informed about her dream life and good taste ("Jerry Hall bought the same one last week"). In particular, we learn a sight more than is necessary about her sex life: "We spent hours exploring a changing landscape of flesh and bone and muscle..." For a denouement she provides a detailed account of a miscarriage. Why didn't someone stop her?

John Keats: A Life by Stephen Coote (Sceptre, £7.99). A fine, conveniently sized life – but in attempting to show Keats as "a man formed by circumstances", the biographer faces a problem. While producing some of the greatest poetry in English, Keats's letters also reveal "the naïvetés of a still inexperienced young man". Coote has a keen eye for a telling quote, whether poetic or prosaic. Leigh Hunt's description of his new locale, Kenish Town, is as true now as then: "a sort of compromise between London and our beloved Hampstead".



Crickets Calling by Rowland Ryder (Faber, £7.99). Born into the crease 82 years ago – as Warwickshire secretary, his father signed up the bowler Jeeves whose name appealed to Wodehouse – Ryder has produced a genial volume of cricketiana. Addicts may be aware that Samuel Beckett was the only Nobel winner to appear in Wisden (he played for Trinity College, Dublin), but did you know that Jardine of "bodyline" infamy became a committed Hindu?



The Last of the Duchess by Caroline Blackwood (Picador, £5.99). In 1980 Caroline Blackwood was asked by the *Sunday Times* to write a piece on the Duchess of Windsor. But first she had to get past the sinister figure of "Maitre Blum", the Duchess's constant companion and watchdog. Fascinated by the relationship between these two women – one "horrible old lady being locked up by another horrible old lady" – Blackwood has drawn an exquisitely chilling picture of life behind the shutters at Neuilly. Most frightening of all is when the author meets Maitre Blum face to face.

The Dead School by Patrick McCabe (Picador, £6.99). This moving and unsentimental novel tells the story of two men who ruin themselves trying to blame their lives on one another: Malachy Dudgeon, a perennial loser who can't hold on to either jobs or women, and Raphael Bell, a headmaster so busy teaching children he never learns to outgrow the loss of his father to the Black and Tans. Evocative of life in the Dublin streets over the past 50 years, this is an assured and absorbing successor to McCabe's grisly 1993 cult novel, *The Butcher Boy*.

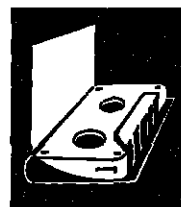


Prozac Nation by Elizabeth Wurtzel (Quartet, £6). Even before Zoë Heller was taking Prozac, Elizabeth Wurtzel was pumped full of the stuff and writing her memoirs. And surprisingly smart and funny they are too (if about 100 pages too long). Crashed out on a bathroom floor in New York she idly wonders if chronically psychotic people ever make it to the "nursing-home-in-Florida phase of life", or whether it's better to die young and pretty.

The Book of Secrets by M.G. Vassanji (Picador, £6.99). Posted to British East Africa, Alfred Corbin kicks off his 1913 Lett's diary complaining about his manservant's annoying habit of singing "Once in Royal David's City" unceasingly. The novel goes on to flesh out the other bit players in Corbin's personal drama (German spies, Swahili chiefs, Indian shopkeepers) in an attempt to make history whole. A beautiful and atmospheric book describing a place where everyone is from somewhere else, and no one can claim the past as their own.



Audiobooks



Evil under the Sun read by David Suchet
The Best of Sherlock Holmes 4 read by John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson and Orson Welles

Nothing like a spot of classic sleuthing to while away the Easter traffic jams. David Suchet is as good at reading fluffy heroines and sly villains as at intoning Poirot's Gallicisms in Christie's *Evil Under the Sun* (Chivers, 6hrs 21 mins, £14.95 by mail order 001225 335336). Other unabridged detective thoroughbreds in the Chivers stable include Dorothy Sayers (excellently read by Ian Carmichael) and Ngaio Marsh.

Holmes 4 (Heritage Media, 2hrs, £7.99 by mail order 01429 838885) is vintage listening, remastered from a 1950s radio series. Orson Welles is a matchless Moriarty, hissing with soft menace as he wrestles our hero to his apparent doom at the Rauschenburg Falls. But Gielgud's languid, aesthetic Holmes survives to prove Richardson's tweedy and impressionable Watson wrong in three more cases.

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gardening

When you've got bags of space, but no privacy

WORKSHOP: The Tileys' garden has huge potential — they just need to add the right hedges and shrubbery. Anna Pavord advises

Three years ago we bought our lovely 17th-century listed stone farmhouse which needed total renovation. We now want to start on the garden but don't know where to begin. At present, the house seems to "float" in its plot. The original farm buildings and surrounding land have been developed and our three-acre garden is totally overlooked. There is evidence that the garden is part of a formal design laid out by a certain Mr Blomfield at the turn of this century, before the estate was broken up. We need ideas for screening, hedging, fencing and generally reorganising the layout of the garden. The grounds possess many elements of a wonderful garden: mature trees, water, woodland, an old grass tennis court and an established flower border. But it totally lacks privacy and there is a huge area of grass to mow. Our requirements include, apart from privacy from our neighbours and the road, a safe play area for our three young children and dogs; a secluded area in which to sit, sunbathe, barbecue; an area for vegetables and fruit trees; a paddock area for ponies, chickens etc. We would like to make the most of the existing features. We would be prepared to build an outbuilding of stone but cannot agree on the best site for it. Indeed, we change our minds daily about what best to do with the whole garden...

There is very much more that is right about Richard and Caroline Tiley's garden than is wrong. They have masses of space for their three young children (William, Sebastian, Flora) to crash about in. There is space, too, for a menagerie of animals, including a grey pony called Scrumpy, a trio of geese, hens and a small flock of ducks who scabble around up-ended in the two ponds at the bottom of the garden. There are some fine trees, including a massive oak set on the west side of the house, and the remnants of an orchard. But the Tileys are right. The garden ought to have its boundaries defined more clearly and the space needs more lines drawn on it to divide it up into comfortable areas. Each area can then take on a distinct character. The farmhouse stretches from north to south with its short north end at right angles to the village street. Between the street and house is a rough area of grass and trees, part of which looked as though it might once have been orchard. The Tileys had already planted a



Richard and Caroline Tiley: changing their minds daily about what best to do with their garden

Photograph: John Lawrence

hedge of blackthorn, hawthorn and hazel to fill in the north side of this space where it butts on to the street. If they plant some hazel to coppice into clumps among the trees there, that northern boundary will soon be taken care of.

They could soften the long board fence that separates them from their neighbours to the west by planting some wild-looking shrub roses. *R. gallica* "Complicata" would have the right look to fit into this semi-wild area.

The drive up to the house leads round the east side of this patch of ground, with modern houses on the left-hand side. I suggested they hedged this boundary with the same mixture as they had already used by the road, incorporating a few ash or field maple that could be allowed to grow up into proper trees

within the hedge. This would provide shelter from the east wind and screen them from one of their neighbours.

With a post-and-rail fence put in parallel with the house, this front area would be completely stockproof — that is, when the hedges have grown up and been properly laid. The pony, the geese and the pet ram, Nigel, could do the mowing. There would be plenty of room to plant more apple trees to thicken up the orchard, now reduced to three old trees.

That outer area was not difficult to resolve. Once inside the garden proper, the problems become more acute. A low stone wall lies to the right of the path to the front door. The path is a pleasing, muddled mixture of flags and cobblestones, a magnet for weeds, but entirely in keeping with the character of the house.

The east boundary of the garden, dividing the Tileys from the new houses adjacent was the one that needed most work. Part of it was made from a low, chain-link fence, part of it from a starved-looking golden privet hedge. The hedge did not stand much chance of growing strongly as it was overshadowed by a huge ash, planted on a slight mound. This tree would dictate the nature of any other planting in the area.

The boundary made two dog-legs before it straightened out to make its long run down towards the ponds at the bottom of the garden. Each dog-leg made two sides of a rectangle. The first one, backed by the chain-link fence, called out to be filled with bulky shrubs. Trees behind would give shelter and privacy. That, above all, seemed to be what

the Tileys wanted in their garden. They would need some evergreens in the mix, so their cover would not entirely vanish in winter. And a combination of fast and slow-growing subjects. For trees, I suggested a fancy thorn, such as *Crataegus punctifolia*, a cool holly such as *JC Van Tol* and slightly in front of them, the double gean *Prunus avium* "Plena".

To infill, I would use mahonia, a handsome cutleaf elder, perhaps *Sambucus nigra* "Laciniata", viburnum, preferably one of the ones built like a wedding cake, such as *V. plicatum* "Lanarth", some philadelphus, draped with clematis for a late summer display and some evergreen choysa. By the time all those had got their feet into the clay (the patch could be 30ft by 15ft), the Tileys wouldn't see the boundary

at all or, in time, the house beyond. The second dog-leg is trickier to resolve, dominated as it is by the monster ash. I would move the rubbish heap in the corner there to another part of the garden, for this part should be treated as "best".

The Tileys were talking about putting up an outbuilding. I wonder if they would consider transferring the funds to build a wall here instead? They would have to see what their neighbours thought about the idea first, but the same neighbours have already put up a short run of wall, about six feet high, which the Tileys wall could join up with. It would strengthen the corner considerably. Then they could do away with the yellow privet and plant rambling roses such as Seagull and Bobbie James over the wall instead. Well mulched by Scrumpy the pony, these could cope with the proximity of the ash.

In the corner itself, I would start off three pieces of yew topiary, perhaps a pyramid and two balls, which would be slow-growing, but ultimately strong features in the garden. Caroline Tiley's letter mentioned that Reginald Blomfield, the Edwardian garden designer, had once worked here. The topiary would reinforce the Edwardian atmosphere of the garden. With spring scillas and autumn cyclamen sprinkled liberally under the ash, the corner would need little more planting.

Blomfield must have planted the strange avenue of pollarded sycamores to create the vista that runs down from the south gable end of the Tileys' house through the avenue to a bridge over the ponds. They are an arresting feature, more like stone columns than trees.

To enclose the east garden, I suggested a yew hedge, running right the way across the east half of the garden to line up with the first sycamore in the avenue. There it could turn at a right angle and run up to the corner of the house, enclosing the east-facing side of the stone terrace, which adjoins the house. Open then only to the sunny south and the west, the terrace would become a much cosier place to sunbathe and have tea.

With three children and their menagerie to look after, this is as much gardening as the Tileys should have on their plate. Wallace, the black Labrador, sailing as smoothly as Rough Quest over the fence into the paddock, reinforced the message. Dogs need gardens, too.

CUTTINGS

The National Auricula and Primula Society is holding a show today at the Village Hall, Horton Road, Datchet, Berkshire. Books and plants for sale. The show opens at 2.15pm (Admission £1).

Plants, like pop groups, go in and out of fashion, but the ever-reinterpreted ballad. Read all about them in The

Gardener's Guide to Growing Hostas by Diana Grenfell (David and Charles, £16.99). Ms Grenfell is the co-proprietor of Apple Court, the nursery at Hordle in Hampshire that specialises in hostas, grasses and day-lilies.

Gardens to visit this weekend include Ashley Manor, near Tetbury, Gloucestershire where the Hoskins have an old

garden next to the church, divided by bulging old yew hedges into four separate compartments. Open today and Monday (2-5pm), admission £1.50. The Hattatts at Arrow Cottage, Ledgemoor, near Weobley in Herefordshire have worked for more than 20 years to create a series of carefully linked garden rooms in their two-acre plot. This is a serious garden, well maintained, full of rare plants. Open today and tomorrow (2-5pm), admission £2.

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Consulting the auricula

With their uncanny perfection auriculas have a theatre all of their own. By Caroline Donald

With representations of flowers, art usually follows nature. With auriculas, the most urbane members of the primula family, however, it is as if they were the other way round. So pure and perfectly defined are the concentric circles of colours in their flower-heads — "trusses" — that you want to touch them to convince yourself that they are living plants.

"They are the most artificial thing imaginable," says David Hadfield, secretary of the Northern Section of the National Primula and Auricula Society. "But that is why we find them so fascinating." Auriculas are artificial, in that most of them are man-made hybrids that bear little relation to the alpine "bear's ears", grown in 17th-century gardens such as John Tradescant's at Lambeth. In the 18th century, green-edged varieties were introduced, with a ring of thick white paste around the centre of each flower ("pip"). The ensuing line, "show auriculas", have remained at the top of the auricula pecking order ever since, with the lesser border and alpine

types considered beyond the pale by cognoscenti such as Mr Hadfield.

Show auriculas are now divided into five types: green-, grey- and white-edged, fancy, and self. As they cover the whole spectrum, the list of colour combinations is seems infinite. Brenda Hyatt, keeper of the national collection of green- and grey-edged show auriculas, has between three and four hundred different named varieties at her nursery in Chatham, Kent. She has also inherited the famous Douglas collection.

Auriculas were reputedly introduced by Huguenot weavers, refugees from Flanders, in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. By the 18th century, they were massively popular. Growers took to displaying their plants at shows in little home-made theatres; the backdrop painted black or with a landscape, and the plants arranged in tiers.

Three years ago at the Chelsea Flower Show, armed with the black velvet backdrop held by the Douglas Collection since 1929, Brenda Hyatt went to town on building a theatre, complete with



Auricula 'Roberta'

Photo: Garden Picture Library

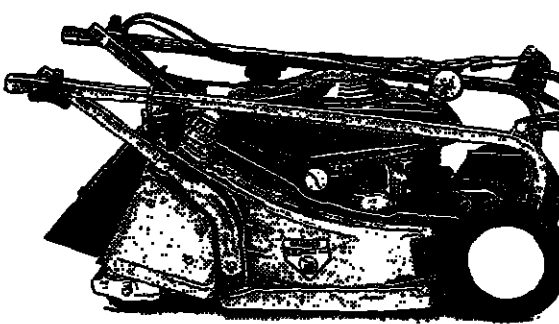
old-fashioned clay pots and mirrors. The resulting media attention, she believes, has contributed to the revival of interest in auriculas, with their colourful flowers cropping up all over the place on furnishing fabrics, cushion covers and paintings.

With patience, you can grow auriculas yourself. In many ways, they are well-suited to the British climate, being able to survive cold winters under snow. They need to be kept out of strong sun, and prefer a well-drained, semi-rich mineral soil. In order to keep the paste on the petals and leaves

from washing off, they should be sheltered from the rain. Once all this has been arranged, and with a Blue-Peter-like transformation of an old shoe box into a theatre, you can mount your very own amateur production.

Catalogues from Brenda Hyatt, 01634 863251. The Northern Section of the National Primula and Auricula Society's show is on 4 May, at Kingsway School, Cheadle. The Southern Section's show is at Holy Trinity Church Hall, London SW3 on 27 April.

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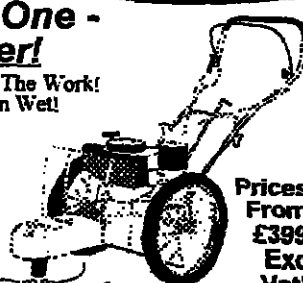
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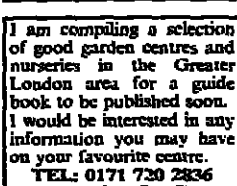
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I am compiling a selection of good garden centres and nurseries in the Greater London area for a guide book to be published soon. I would be interested in any information you may have on your favourite centre. Please call 01773 730 2836 or 0956 167 250 (to leave a message).



WEEKEND WORK

Dogwoods grown for their winter display of ornamental bark should be cut back hard to encourage new growth from the base of the shrub. Bark on fresh shoots is more brightly coloured than that on old wood.

Hydrangeas may also need secateur work. Clean off old flower heads and cut out stems that seem very weak. Some shoots end in a forest of spindly twigs. Take one or two of those out entirely, cutting as low down as you can, to encourage fresh strong growth. Using a pair of shears, or one-handed clippers, clean off dead flowers from winter-flowering heathers.

Lift and divide clumps of perennials that did not flower very well last season. The strongest new growth of many herbaceous plants is round the outside of the clump. Replant these pieces in ground pepped up with bonemeal or Growmore and water regularly until established. Because of the drying combination of wind and sun at this time of the year, all new plants need to be well watered regularly.

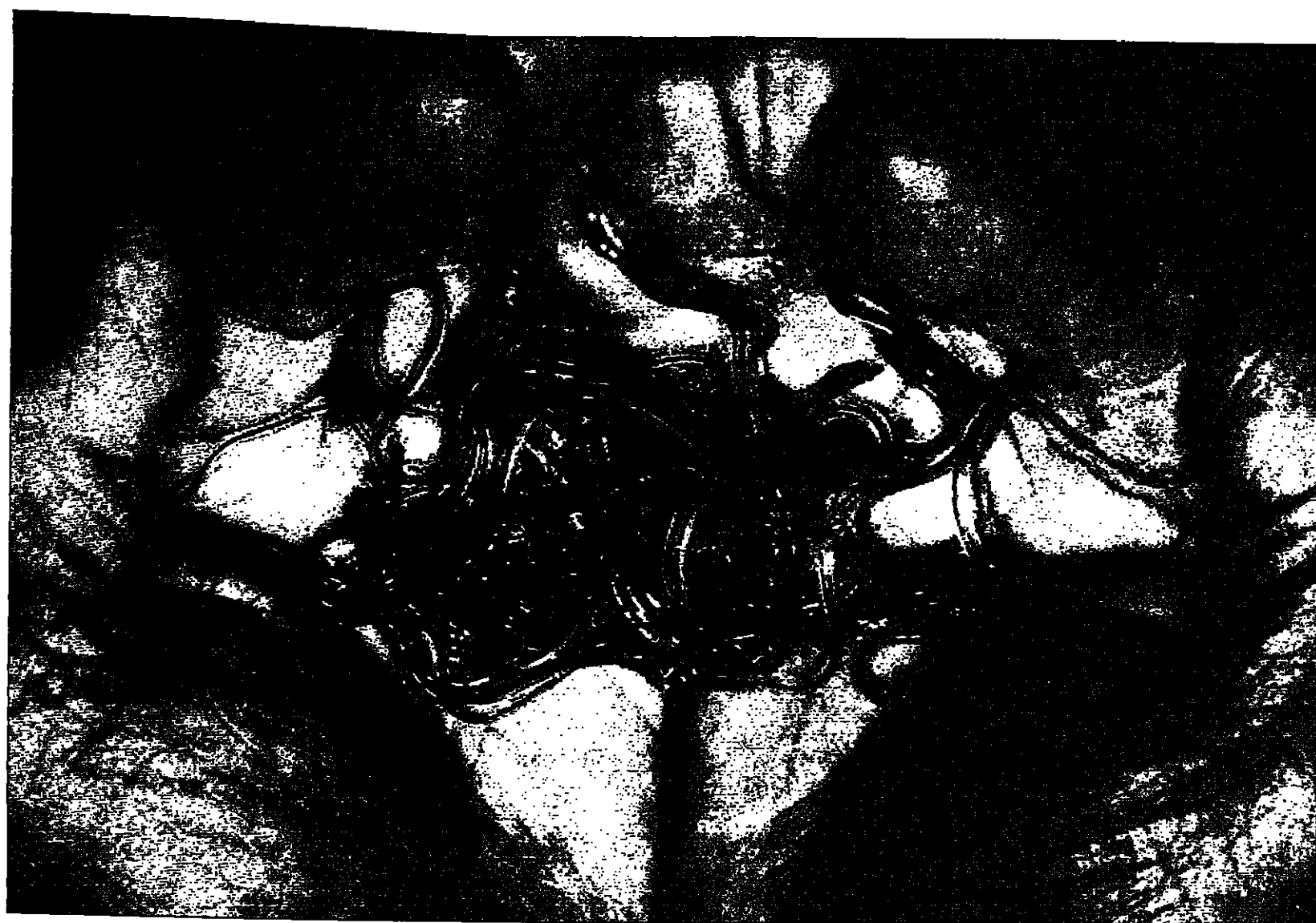
Cloches protect early vegetables and can be used to warm the ground before sowing. Try radish, lettuce and spinach under cloches for early crops. Crop covers such as fleece and perforated poly-

thene have the same effect and protect against pests such as cabbage and carrot root fly, caterpillars and aphids.

Plant summer-flowering bulbs such as gladiolus, galtonia and nerine. If your ground is still cold and soggy, start the bulbs off in pots of compost and plant them out when conditions improve.

Take cuttings of junipers, such as the low, spreading *Juniperus horizontalis* by snipping off side shoots where they join a main stem and sticking them round the edge of a 5-inch pot of compost. Keep the pot covered with a polythene bag until the cuttings have rooted.

01773 730 2836



Some of the spring catch: eiders, or baby eels, are transparent and weigh just 0.3g each

A handful of eels will yield a tidy profit — but this tricky fish is giving nothing away

By Daniel Butler

The Japanese have wasted millions trying to breed eels in captivity. Apparently there is something out there in the Atlantic which they can't replicate in the laboratory. It's a good thing — I'd be out of a job otherwise.

The shadowy figure standing on the banks of the Parrett Estuary in Somerset shudders in the bitter cold of the spring night. It is the small hours of the morning and, as an elver buyer, this is the climax of the working day.

The eel trade is worth millions of pounds a year and most of the catch will be air-freighted to the other side of the world — yet for all its value and global spread, the industry is entirely dependent on a bizarre and imperfectly understood life cycle.

The elvers — or baby eels — which are the targets of tonight's nets, were born thousands of miles away. Those that escape the fishermen are on their way to the brooks, ditches and drains of the British countryside. When they are fully grown — normally about two feet in length — the adult fish are suddenly filled with an urge to head west. They abandon their ponds and backwaters for the nearest river which they follow down to the sea. Then they head back to their spawning grounds, but precisely how remains a mystery.

"On a good night a fisherman might land two or three kilograms of elvers in six hours," explains the waiting buyer cautiously. "When conditions are perfect it could even be as high as 5kg."

Such a haul represents a tidy profit too — the going price this season is likely to exceed £55 a kilo — but by the time the eels reach their final market in Europe or the

What the scientists know about eels

Eels spawn in the Sargasso Sea, between the Azores and the Bahamas. At first the tiny larvae are mixed with American eels, but off Florida the species part company, leaving the European fish to be carried east by the Gulf Stream. It used to be thought that they spent two or three years on the journey, but recent research indicates it could be as little as a year. When they arrive on Europe's west coast, some remain at sea, some go as far as estuaries and rivers, and a proportion (mainly female) heads upstream, making for inland ditches and ponds to feed on insects, invertebrates and fish. Although a true fish, complete with scales and gills, the eel can absorb oxygen

through its skin for short periods, allowing it to leave the water and move short distances across wet grass. Colouration and size are good indicators of age. Elvers are transparent (hence the name "glass eels"), about 7cm long and weigh just 0.3g each. They darken and as they mature in murky inland waters, becoming yellow-green for camouflage. As they prepare to return to sea, this fades to leave the fish silver of top, with a white belly to disguise it in the clearer ocean water. Eels seem capable of determining their own gender — although how remains unclear. Females tend to be larger, growing to well over 40cm in length, but cannot be sexed without dissection.

Far East the price will have doubled. The catch of "glass eels" is destined for foreign fish farms where they will be reared to supply the rest of the world's seemingly insatiable appetite for the fish. In contrast, apart from the dwindling demand from traditional Cockney fish stalls, we British won't eat eels.

Yet they remain a vital component in the diet of many British predators. "They're easy to catch, abundant and are particularly likely to be found in shallow water, such as ditches," explains Graham Roberts at Hampshire Wildlife Trust. "This makes them the perfect food for otters: a low-energy hunt followed by a high-energy reward."

Eels have the highest food value of any British fish: at 1,635 calories per pound, easily outstripping salmon and far higher than all freshwater fish. Lying behind the high calorific value is the flesh's excep-

tionally high fat content, but ironically the same fat was almost responsible for the otter's extinction 20 years ago. Pesticide residues from DDT and dieldrin are fat-soluble and this was further exacerbated by the eel's bottom-living habits, longevity and its relative pollution-tolerance. As a result, eels are concentrating toxins long after other fish have died.

Today the threat from DDT has largely passed, but new pollutants — and the long-lasting PCBs in particular — have taken their place. This gives the eel a new importance to the National Rivers Authority which has just begun a study across Hampshire, Sussex and Kent, using the fish as living pollution recorders. "They are the perfect barometer of the health of a river system," explains Mr Roberts. "They are long-lived, have a limited movement once they reach an area and have a high fat content — that means they pick up and store pollution."

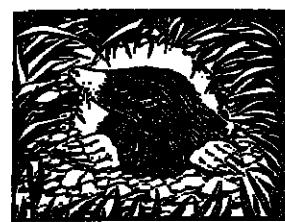
Another reason for research is the perception that eels are in decline. As with everything about this secretive fish, no one is really sure of the trends. "The problem is you can't rely on elver fishermen or buyers for figures — they're an incredibly secretive bunch," says Mr Knight, a member of the European Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee. Anecdotal evidence, however, points to falling catches at a time of increasing demand. "Customs and Excise figures show the number of elvers shipped abroad from the Severn has dropped from 40 tonnes in 1979 to 15 tonnes today and similar drops have been recorded in Holland and France," says Mr Knight.

Yet again, no one is certain what lies behind the falling numbers, but scientists tend towards two general theories. The first suggests the drop is merely part of a natural cycle. This is supported by detailed figures from Holland which show regular peaks and troughs every 20 years or so.

Much more worrying is the suggestion that the Gulf Stream is changing direction. Temperature readings off Newfoundland show that the huge ocean current which controls Britain's weather has moved northwards. With the Gulf Stream vital to its life cycle, this may well affect the elver population — although quite how has yet to be explained.

The fishermen on the Parrett seem more concerned with the sharp frost rather than the course of the Gulf Stream, however, although they confirm the elvers are running particularly late this year. "My first decent catch wasn't until last week — in a good year it would be January," mutters one as he inspects his empty net. "All the same, I reckon there'll be eels in Somerset long after I'm dead and buried."

Sailor, cider-maker, river bailiff and fount of arcane information



DUFF HART-DAVIS

He came back from Japan with a geisha girl tattooed on his right arm, so obscene that he had to get the Bristol specialist Les Scuse to put a gown on her before he dared show the picture to his mother. By the time Les had done with him, he had cheeky girls prancing up his legs; on the back of his right arm a tall ship was heeling under sail; over his chest spread the family coat of arms. On his back was a fox-hunt in full cry. Across his shoulders four riders were taking a fence; down his shoulder-blades hounds cascaded, and at the bottom was the fox, disappearing — to put it politely — over his coccyx.

As the vicar remarked at his funeral service, Jasper Ely was an extraordinary man. Once met, never forgotten, he was one of Gloucestershire's last great characters. With his blue eyes and rubicund cheeks, framed by a halo of snow-white beard and hair — on top of which sat a nautical cap, indoors and out — he looked what he was, a sailor come ashore. But he was many other things besides: soldier, cider-maker, river-bailiff, farmer, and above all fount of information on numerous arcane subjects.

His stamping ground was that strange area known as the Arlingham Peninsula, where the Severn sweeps round in a wide horseshoe south of Gloucester, and the sleepy grassland is so far removed from the bustle of life as to seem another world. He was born in 1926 at Burnthouse, where his family had farmed for generations. As a boy he could not sleep, but spent nights reading voraciously, and so laid the foundations of his encyclopaedic knowledge.

Fed up with school at 14, he went to Bristol to work on the river barges, then graduated to coasters, tankers and banana-boats. At 18 he was called up into the army, and found a niche as a cook. After service in India and Burma, he visited Hiroshima, in ruins after the bomb. At that time servicemen were being offered assisted passages to Australia; Jasper fancied a new life there, but when his sweetheart in England declined to go with him, he returned home and settled at Priding Farm, a smallholding and orchard on the bank of the Severn.

It delighted him — one of the world's great imbibers — that the house had once been a temperance hotel. Perhaps as a riposte, he imported an ancient press and began to make rough cider as strong as table wine. (He would down a pint for breakfast, as lesser men drink coffee.) With his liking for old-fashioned strains, he bred Gloucester cattle, Cotswold sheep, Old Spot pigs and various kinds of poultry, to which he were always "fowls".

To supplement his income

he took a job as bailiff on the Severn, and came to know every inch of the waterway. He was marvellously knowledgeable about its moods and tides, the elvers which swarm upriver in spring, and that dying breed of fishermen, the putchers, who catch salmon in wickerwork baskets deployed like weirs across the stream. After his early set-back in love, he had little time for women, and remained a life-long bachelor. He did not learn to drive until he was 40, scorned television, and never had a telephone in the house. Nevertheless, he was immensely magnetic. Just as friends brought him antique machinery, until the ramshackle farmyard was choked with it, so people gathered from far and wide to hear him discourse on varieties of cider apples, on cattle, the river and the sea.

It is difficult to convey the authority which his pronouncements carried. When he said, "Pears is for heirs," you recognised a definitive statement about the longevity of "they old brown perry pear trees", which take 25 years to start producing. When he spoke of the Severn Bore (which he always referred to as "he"), you felt that he was on intimate terms with its elemental force.

With his striking appearance, fine voice, double Gloucester accent and still ripper turn of phrase, he was a natural star for local radio and television; but producers soon realised that they ran dire risks with his broadcasts.

In recent months, as his heart gave out, he became an invalid; but still, on his deathbed, he directed the planting of 17 new apple trees, to complete his renovation of the orchard. And when he died, an astonishing variety of friends gathered to bury him. The church at Arlingham was packed by more than 200 people, several with beards like those of Old Testament prophets, some of astonishing girth. The congregation included solicitors, businessmen, farmers, poachers, brewers, publicans, postmen. Afterwards, at luncheon, he piled into the Red Lion — his daily haunt — and for six hours the bar was in a roar with Jasper stories. But I felt saddened by the thought that his spirit had already gone down the shining river, and that we would never see the like of him again.

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Dick Walgate, Chairman of the Flying Farmers Association

Our farming operation is unusual in being divided between three parts of the country, hundreds of miles apart. Our main operation at Cuxwold Hall Farm, in Lincolnshire covers 1,700 acres and is largely arable, but there is an outdoor pig unit. Using a light aircraft means I can set off after breakfast, have a full day's work and still have the luxury of being home in time for supper.

Given the state of the motorways, with the horrendous congestion from traffic and road repairs, being able to fly above it all makes for efficiency and the costs can be no greater than running a Range Rover.

I first obtained a pilot's licence in 1955 after taking lessons at Skegness and my Cessna 206, bought in 1980, is the third aircraft of its type we've owned. Above all else, it's a management tool and I don't use it for recreation.

It can be particularly useful in distributing medicines — which we buy in bulk — to the various farms. I sometimes fly one product to another unit if we need more of it there.



COUNTRY PURSUITS

On occasions, we've even taken out seats and carried livestock in crates, including deer, as well as spare parts for the machinery.

The thrill of flying has never left me, especially when the weather is glorious over the northern hills and the colours seem to change weekly — but it is always a challenge and you never know what each trip has in store.

My wife, Rachel, sometimes flies north with me to see the grandchildren but my labradors fly with me all the time. They are working animals and are always needed on the ground. Increasingly, farmers are seeing the advantages of light aircraft and the Flying Farmers Association now has about 400 members. It was started 20 years ago and I'm sure we will expand much more. One woman

farmer near Dover uses a light aircraft to run 800 acres by herself.

From the air, we can assess the condition of stock and crops for disease, spot bad drainage, areas missing fertiliser or even mistakes made by contractors.

You can pick up a second-hand aircraft for about £7,000. Maintenance can be quite expensive — but perhaps no more so than with a Land Rover — and aviation fuel costs about £2.30 a gallon. The Flying Farmers Association offers advice on all aspects of flying, including how to get planning permission for a landing-strip. We also supply maps of the locations of members' farms so that we can land virtually anywhere for free.

On several occasions during the year, a group of 25 farmers might fly to study-visits, such as fruit or sugar-beet farms or machinery demonstrations. Years ago, when I was younger, I did aerobatics in an old RAF aircraft I bought but these days my aeroplane is purely an agricultural tool. I think I'm a better farmer for having access to the skies.

Dick Walgate was talking to Andrew Morgan.

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٥٥: من اجل

With Wordsworth, Wainwright and a strong pair of walking boots you really can't go wrong

By Adam Lechmere

The fuel system on the car packed up as we breasted Kirkstone Pass, just south of Ullswater. We had anticipated a few healthy walks to get the blood circulating, but that didn't mean an 18-mile trek over the hills to get a pint of milk. After about 24 hours, however, we realised that to be without a car was the greatest good fortune that could have hit us.

Other parts of the British Isles are wild and beautiful, or rugged, or remote. There are lakes, there are mountains, there are moors. But there is nothing quite like the completeness and the compactness of

the Lakes. You can climb Helvellyn in the morning and on a clear day you can see the hills for miles around, and over to the west, the sea. The peaks have hard but comfortable names - Hart Crag, Dolly-waggon Pike - and they look benign but severe in the sunlight.

Wordsworth, one of the two undisputed stars of the Lake District, thought nothing of walking the 18 miles from Grasmere to Keswick and back again. Wherever you go, you feel that stern poetic presence. Everything becomes inspirational: an old gatepost poking up from the ruins of a miner's hut, a stunted hawthorn clinging to the bank of the lake.

The other great presence is Wainwright. An amateur cartographer, he charted every peak in the Lake District, a labour that fills seven volumes with handwritten text and pen and ink drawings. He recommends paths and shortcuts, alternatives for fine weather and foul. Every hill is mapped from every angle, and there is still room for comments like "To the east (Dove Crag) presents a scarred and rugged face, a face full of character and interest". With Wordsworth, Wainwright and a good pair of boots, you can't go wrong.

On the last day we walked over to Grasmere and stopped at Dove Cottage, where Wordsworth lived at

the beginning of the last century. The path follows the valley below Helvellyn, with the jagged outline of Striding Edge visible most of the way. Fields of sheep give way to a rocky climb up to Grisedale Tarn, and from there you can see Grasmere glinting in the next valley.

The town of Grasmere is a rude shock after a few days of empty mountains. The Prelude Hotel, the chintzy arcades, the tea-rooms with their off-hand staff and the shops selling cutesy animals and perfumed wooden fruit all make you want to run straight back to the hills.

Yet Grasmere was worth visiting for the horrors of Dove Cottage.

Preserved since 1891, it gives an idea of life in a middle-class household 150 years ago. Cold, damp, dark and dirty: the walls in the kitchen had to be whitewashed every five months. The house was full of family, assorted opium addicts and children - Coleridge and son, De Quincey and daughters. There is a wonderful portrait of Coleridge, painted in the depths of his "enslavement", looking bloated and mad, more drugged than poet.

We took a taxi back to Patterdale. "Me, I don't walk. I'm too lazy," the driver said. It was then that we realised we hadn't missed the car for a moment.



Starkly appealing: the Langdale Pikes

Photograph: Tony Stone

LAKELAND DEPARTURES

Travellink is the name of the Cumbria County Council's bus, boat and rail information line; call 01228 812812 from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Numerous special deals are available for the visitor. Stagecoach Cumbria, which runs buses in the Lake District, has a one-day family ticket (two adults, two children) which allows unlimited travel for £9.99. For £5.01 more, the Lakes and Furness Day Ranger is a permit for rail travel as well as Windermere lake cruises. The most useful bus for visitors is the 555, which runs from Kendal to Keswick via Windermere and Ambleside.

A Day Out ticket from North West Regional Railways allows travel from stations in North Wales and North West England

to the Lake District for a fixed price of £9.90, if you book by 8pm the day before. This saves nearly 50 per cent on the normal fare from Manchester, for example.

The Ullswater Navigation and Transit Company, which began sailing in 1855, starts its 1996 services tomorrow. Its vessels are Victorian: *Lady of the Lake*, built in 1877, and the *Raven*, younger by 12 years. Call 01539 721626 for times and fares.

Today the season begins for the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway (01229 717171). Steam-hauled trains cover the seven miles from the coast to Dalegarth in 40 minutes, on rails with a gauge of just 15 inches. An Eskdale Explorer (two adults plus two children, or three adults) costs £14.50.



SIMON CALDER

Poor old Cunard. The venerable shipping line, founded by Samuel Cunard in Liverpool in 1840, has been hounded by bad luck. The holling and subsequent evacuation of the Cunard-owned *Royal Viking Sun* near Ajaba, Jordan is just the latest in a sequence of curses upon the line. The *Titanic* belonged to the White Star Line, a company which Cunard later took over.

Disasters since then have been mainly of the public relations variety, such as the occasion when the company's flagship, the *Queen Elizabeth 2*, ran aground off the northeast United States. The nadir was the re-launch of the *QE2* in 1994 after a £30m refit. The event took place before the work had been completed.

"So much went wrong," reported the *Independent* "that it is hard to pick the real lowlight. VIPs were shown around what was little better than a building site, visitors jostling for space with contractors and tripping over cleaners' buckets." Cunard paid £7.5 million to dissatisfied passengers on that voyage.

At least Cunard gives its passengers the opportunity to sail. I am still waiting for the chance to try out the new Stena Line HSS, a high-speed ferry that, in theory, takes you from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire in 99 smooth minutes. Three "definite" start dates have been given over the past three months: 1 October, 1 March and 30 March. I am not pinning my hopes on travelling on the latest deadline, 9 April.

Should the shipping business look like a ropey one to be in, at least it is better than running a state-owned airline. Olympic Airways has just sacked its chairman and chief executive, Rigas Doganis, despite his producing the Greek carrier's first good financial results for years. Professor Doganis is

sanguine about his loss of office. He told me this week that "running a state-owned airline consists of long periods of crisis management interspersed with short periods of catastrophe management." Perhaps he would like a job at Cunard.

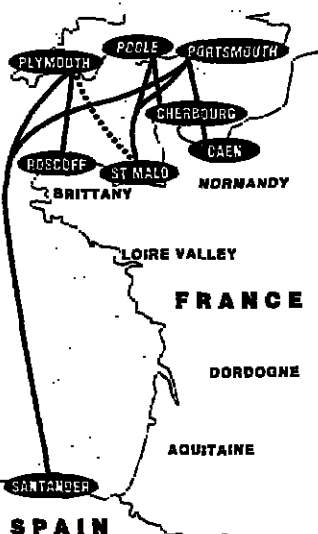
To get from Aldwych to Ongar by tube, change trains at Holborn and Epping. So say three brand-new guide books: *Let's Go: Europe 1996*, the latest *Rough Guide to England* and the *AA Cityguide to London*. All carry maps showing Aldwych and Ongar on the London Underground network. But both stations closed 18 months ago.

As the guidebook writer who published a book on Eastern Europe with the memorable line "There seems no end in sight to the Ceausescu dynasty" about a week before the Romanian dictator was deposed, I am painfully aware of the perishable nature of the information in guides.

So too are *Rough Guides* and *AA Publishing*, neither of which claim infallibility. But *Let's Go* assures the world that the writers of its books "check every fact, every year". You could take the charitable view that the closures of these two stations came too late for the '95 edition, but on the very first page of the *Let's Go '96* is the rather less than true "fact" that Aldwych to Ongar is a trivial journey by tube.

Don't rely on guide books to settle arguments, either. When a colleague claimed that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Canada is the world's biggest country, I reached for the new *Lonely Planet* guide to Russia, Belarus and Ukraine to prove him wrong. "Russia is the world's biggest country", it says in black and white. Unconvinced, he checked the same publisher's guide to Canada: "Canada is the world's biggest country".

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For Lilliput, read Lisbon

Portugal's capital is an apt setting for the new dramatisation of Gulliver's Travels. By Michael Church

There's always something dangerous about Lisbon, something darkly mysterious, as though it's the edge of the world. With its colonial roots in Africa, Goa, and Brazil, it doesn't really feel like Europe. Two centuries ago it was immensely rich, now it's grindingly poor: its gorgeous vistas and crumbling architectural beauties offer a cocktail that film-makers, in particular, seem unable to resist.

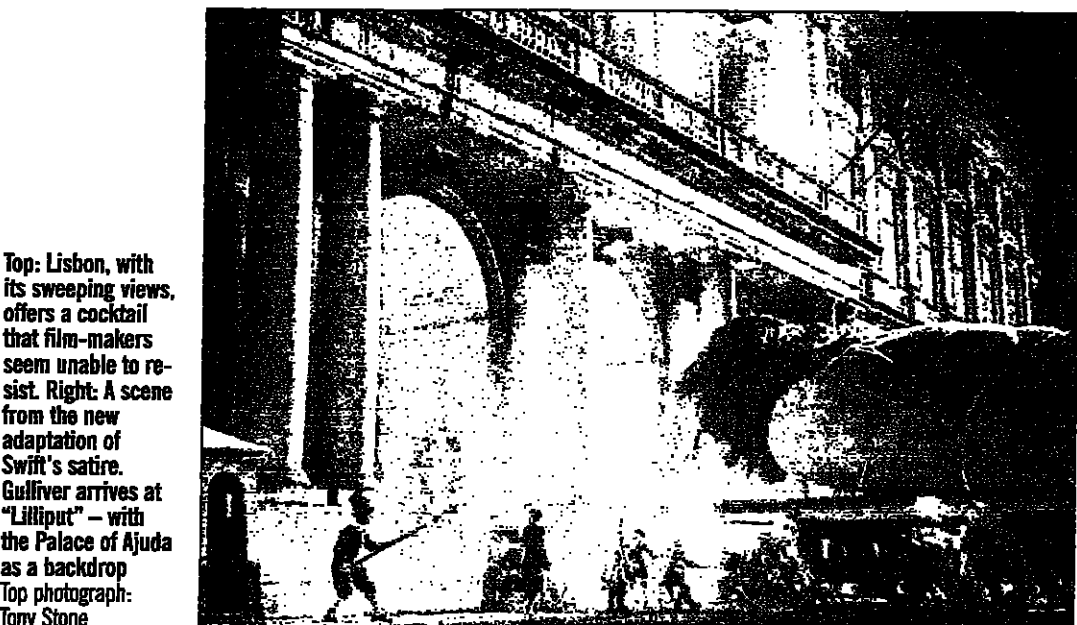
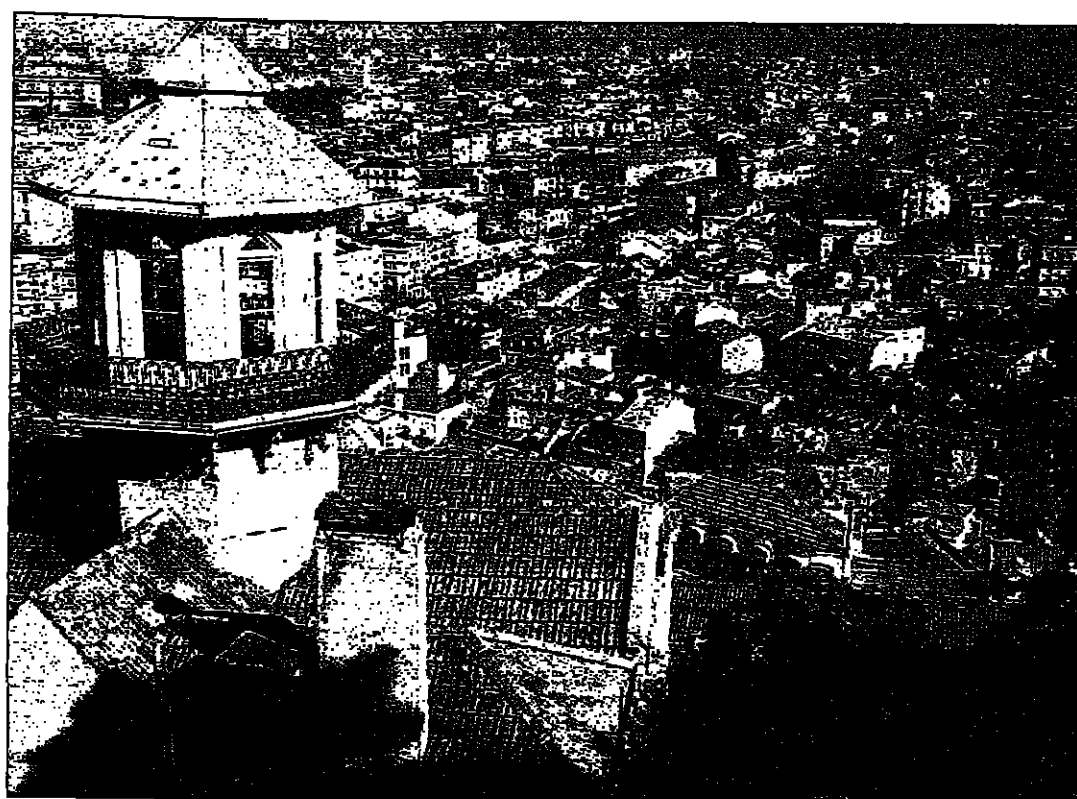
Wim Wenders has made two films in this capital city. François Truffaut's *Anguilla* was filmed there, as was Bill August's *The House of the Spirits*. The French enfant-terrible Cyril Collard chose a lighthouse overlooking the Tagus as the location for a pre-emptive docu-drama about his own death from AIDS: not so much the edge of the world, more its actual end. The caretaker of the 18th-century monastery at Cabo Espichel has lost count of the film-makers using it as a location: a dusty Miss Havisham of a church, proud in a bare landscape.

The Ted Danson-Mary Steenburgen dramatisation of *Gulliver's Travels*, which Channel 4 is broadcasting this weekend, draws much of its force from the palaces, streets, and beaches amid which its action unfolds: for Lilliput, read Lisbon. But read on: what producer Duncan Kenworthy and director Charles Sturridge have created is a paean to all the loveliest places in the region.

When Gulliver makes his triumphal entry into Lilliput, he does so via Lisbon's mosaic-paved Rua Augusta, along which tourists normally troop in their thousands. When he peers through a window into the Lilliputians' War Room, he is actually peering into the library of the palace of Mafra, an 18th-century architectural jewel where no film crew has been allowed before. As Kenworthy points out, the beauty of this location lay in its unrestored, still-lived-in quality. He had originally planned to use the crazily Romantic palace of Pena, but, by the time they came to shoot, it had been painted a Disneyish yellow.

Palaces, palaces... the 17th-century National Palace of Ajuda serves as the site where Gulliver is first brought before the Lilliputian emperor and his court. And the exquisite palace of Queluz, with its classical gardens and halls of mirrors, is the setting for Gulliver's meeting with the giant queen of Brobdingnag. Built by a French architect as an homage to Versailles, it was long used for royal receptions, and now serves as a concert venue as well as a tourist haunt.

Byron was mind-blown by the beauty of Monserrate Park, just outside Sintra. With its mock-oriental palace and sub-tropical gardens, this makes the ideal backdrop for Swift's kingdom of Laputa. And, with its cooling summer mists, the ideal refuge, I'd say, when the coast gets too hot.



Top: Lisbon, with its sweeping views, offers a cocktail that film-makers seem unable to resist. Right: A scene from the new adaptation of Swift's satire. Gulliver arrives at "Lilliput" - with the Palace of Ajuda as a backdrop. Top photograph: Tony Stone

Win a Gulliver-inspired weekend in Lisbon

To mark the broadcast of *Gulliver's Travels* on Channel 4 this weekend, the Independent has joined forces with specialist tour operator The Magic of Portugal to offer a long weekend in and around Lisbon.

The winner of our competition will fly from London to Lisbon on TAP Air Portugal and spend three nights at the superior four-star Hotel Lisboa Plaza, centrally located for making the most of the Portuguese capital.

During the course of the three-night stay a sightseeing tour will be offered to the beautiful towns of Sintra and Mafra, which also feature in the film.

The Magic of Portugal is an award-winning holiday specialist, offering holidays to Lisbon, Sintra, the Douro Valley, Madeira and the Alentejo. For a free brochure featuring quality hotels and villas, telephone 01233 211619. For information on flights with TAP Air Portugal call 0171-828 0962.

How to enter

Answer these three questions...

1. What former Portuguese colony has just opened an airport for the first time, served from Lisbon and Brussels by TAP Air Portugal?
2. In which year will Lisbon host the next International Expo?
3. Unscramble trains to reach your destination outside Lisbon?

... and in 20 words or less suggest the ideal destination for a weekend getaway for Gulliver - and why!

Send your entry to Gulliver, Travel, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, to arrive no later than Friday 19 April.

Usual Newspaper Publishing plc rules apply. The prize is non-transferable and no cash alternative can be offered. The holiday is subject to availability and must be taken during July 1996.

EUROPEAN DEPARTURES

Train travellers in the Netherlands can benefit from a range of special deals from Holland Rail. First, the Train Taxi scheme which is available at 80 stations around the country. For a flat fare of 6 guilders (about £2.50), you can take a taxi from the station to any destination within the town or city limits (sadly the scheme doesn't apply in Amsterdam, the Hague or Rotterdam). For the same amount, cyclists can rent a bike from selected stations for the whole day. And if you want to see an entire country in a day, Holland is the place to do it. A one-day rover ticket allowing rail travel anywhere in Holland costs £27, and £3 more buys unlimited bus and tram travel within towns and cities.

Disabled travellers are not getting the help they might from the European Commission, according to the newly revised *Disabled Traveller* (free from BSS, PO Box 7, London W5 2GQ; send a large sae with 62p in stamps). The author, Alison Walsh, says a series of guidebooks for disabled people have yet to be published by the Commission, despite the manuscripts having been delivered at the end of 1994.

The cool new weekend destination is Riga, Latvia's capital, accessible four times weekly from Gatwick on Air Baltic (0171-828 4223) for £269. Organised trips are available through Gannet Travel Service (01473 828655) or Regent Holidays (0117-921 1711).

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I want to go to unspoilt Spain. But can I be sure I'm not going to damage it myself?

Our monthly series in which Jeremy Skidmore answers readers' questions about their travel concerns



I'd like to travel to Spain with an environmentally sensitive tour operator. Can I?

Yes. But remember that people mean different things when they talk about being environmentally sensitive. Many companies have jumped on to the environment bandwagon because they think it will make them appeal to more people. To qualify as environmentally sensitive, tour operators need to do more than merely recommend to their clients that they take their litter home. Those that do qualify are the ones that donate money to projects in areas where they send holidaymakers. Planos' Spain at Heart programme operates in unspoilt villages in Andalusia and the operator supports a government-sponsored scheme of developing abandoned farmhouses. For a full list of environmentally sensitive tour operators contact the Association of Independent Tour Operators on 0181-744 9280.

I'm not convinced about my travel agent's ability to give reliable and up-to-date information regarding safety in politically unstable destinations. Should I call the appropriate embassy myself?

No, your travel agent should be able to give you all the up-to-date information that you require. The Association of British Travel Agents receives constantly updated information from the Foreign Office about destinations which it relays to travel agents. If you are still not convinced, then contact the Foreign Office yourself on 0171-270 4129; (from 18 April, call 0171-238 4503).

Returning from Indonesia my surfboard was broken in transit. However, because I travelled by two different airlines, neither would take responsibility. What is the airline's responsibility towards damaged articles?

The carriage of items that are termed "fragile", like surfboards, is a bit of a minefield. It is important that before you travel you establish liability in the event of goods being damaged, especially if you are travelling on some of the less established airlines which may not have as rigid a code of conduct as the major carriers. Your travel agent should be able to advise you. Generally speaking, you have to pay an additional cost at check-in for the transport of "fragile goods", which includes surfboards, televisions, stereos and tape recorders. The charges vary, but across a broad selection of airlines, the average fee was \$50 (£31). At this stage you must establish if the fee covers you for the entire journey. With some airlines it will, but with others it may only cover you for that leg of the journey. Also, if you want to make sure that the surfboard does not get broken, it must be properly

packaged. If it is not, the airline will probably still accept it but may make you sign a "limited release waiver", which basically means that the airline is not liable if it gets broken.

I had a lovely winter holiday with Horizon and remarked to my travel agent that I would go with them again. But I was told there won't be a Horizon brochure next winter. Has the company gone out of business?

No, Horizon is a brand that belongs to Thomson, the biggest tour operator in the country. Thomson shows no sign of going out of business, but has admitted that sales for its Horizon brand have been slipping. Horizon now accounts for only around 3 per cent of Thomson's winter and summer sales, which are approximately 1m and 3m respectively. Thomson has decided that it no longer makes economic sense to publish a separate winter brochure for Horizon, so it has put the hotels from that brand into its other programmes, which include Portland, Thomson Winter Sun and Thomson Young at Heart. Many think that the Horizon name will also disappear for summer 1997 but Thomson insists that no decision has yet been made about that because the Horizon programme is much bigger in the summer than in the winter. It also points out that while there is very little difference between

Thomson and Horizon in the winter, as they both offer four-star hotels, there is in the summer when Thomson tends to feature mainly three-star properties and Horizon mainly four-star hotels.

I enjoy travelling alone, but am increasingly frustrated by single supplements. Prices are often higher and accommodation inferior. How does the industry justify this?

It justifies the single supplements by explaining that hotels in resorts base their prices on two people sharing. A hotelier may charge a tour operator £100 per person per week, but that is based on two people staying in each room. A single traveller will end up paying more than others, and could be put in a poky little room - hardly fair. However, the situation is improving as hoteliers and tour operators realise that there are more and more single travellers. Indeed, many of the newer hotels do not have poky little single rooms. Also many tour operators waive single supplements if you travel outside the peak season of July and August. Single people often like to travel off-peak, when resorts are not full of children.

Send your questions to: The Travel Desk, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

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with easy access to either the metro or public transport. For Brussels, there are mid-week supplements for three and four star hotels upwards, from £8 per person per night. Listed on this page are details of the hotels.

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The spirit of the Ancients

Galileo, Goethe, Palladio: they all came to Rome. So did Matthew Hoffman, who spent a long weekend retracing their steps on a motor scooter

A friend who knew I was going to Rome for a long weekend gave me a copy of Goethe's *Letters from Italy*, in one of those little Penguin 60p editions. As I flew over the clouds at 500 miles per hour, I settled back to follow Goethe's more leisurely progression 200 years ago by horse-drawn carriage down through the Italian peninsula. To my delight I discovered that Goethe had lingered in the Veneto, taking time to examine the Renaissance buildings of Andrea Palladio, as I too had done last September. And the effect on both of us of coming to know this architect's work was similar. "Palladio," Goethe observed, "was strongly imbued with the spirit of the Ancients... [He] has opened [this] to me, and the way to all art and life as well." (Well, perhaps, my enthusiasm for Palladio is slightly more tempered; but I think I know what Goethe is getting at. The balance and proportion evident in Palladio's work seems to betoken the possibility of a moral, as well as an aesthetic, harmony in the universe.)

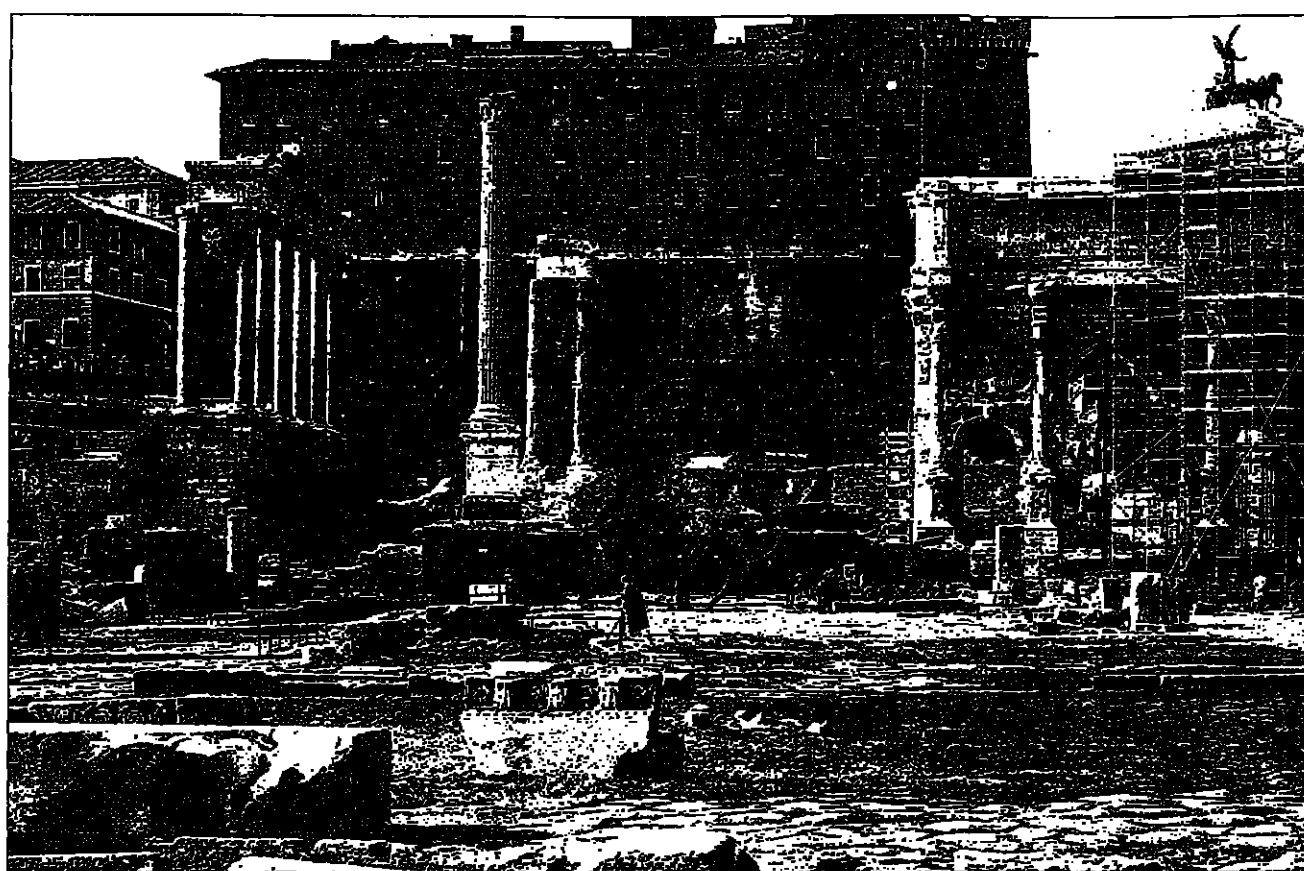
When Doug Hall and Diane Andrews, artists from San Francisco who are at the American Academy in Rome for a year (he to complete a video and photography project and she to paint the Italian sky) invited me to visit them, I decided to give focus to my trip by searching out the Roman remains that Palladio himself had studied in the 1540s and 1550s. I would look at Ancient Rome through Palladio's eyes, and modern Rome through Doug and Diane's enthusiasms.

Although I had defined my weekend as five days - arrive Thursday afternoon, depart Monday evening - I would never have seen as much as I did if it had not been for Doug's *motorino* - motor scooter, I soon realised, are the way Romans in a hurry get about.

You can see a lot from the back of a

motorino. My plane arrived at Leonardo da Vinci airport at 2.30 pm. By 4.30, I was perched on the back of Doug's 500cc Honda, and within an hour or two we had seen Bramante's famous Tempietto; buzzed about Trastevere, the Piazza Farnese, the Campo dei Fiori, and the Piazza Navona; admired Caravaggio's *Madonna di Loreo* in the church of Sant'Agostino; explored the pre-Christian vaults of the Stadium of Domitian beneath Sant'Agnese in Agone; picked out with my spyglass touching and beguiling details in the reliefs on the Column of Marcus Aurelius; looked with baffled amazement at Andrea Pozzo's *trionfo l'ocil* dome in the Jesuit church of Sant' Ignazio; come across Silvio Berlusconi standing with other government dignitaries next to a hearse outside Sant' Ignazio; and, finally, stopped to sample ice cream at one of the famous *gelateria* near the Pantheon.

The next morning the three of us went to the Vatican museums: Diane to look at portraits in the Pinacoteca, Doug to photograph the tourists and I to see again the Raphael Stanze and the Sistine chapel. Although it was winter there were still too many tourists crowding the little Raphael rooms for me to enjoy the painted walls and ceilings - also I was probably exhausted from my earlier concentration on Michaelangelo's grand fresco cycle. We had entered the Sistine Chapel at about 11 am, and I had immediately found a quiet corner to sit down with my spyglass and look up at the ceiling. An hour and a half later I staggered up to Diane at the other end of the room, having no idea how long I had been immersed in Michaelangelo's grand conception. The cleaning of the paintings may well, as the critics contend, have removed some of the intended patina from the figures, but it has also made it possible to discern with ease so much more detail and for me, at least, the trade-off has been revelatory.



Left: The glorious shambles at the heart of Rome

Below: A motorino - the best way to get around the city

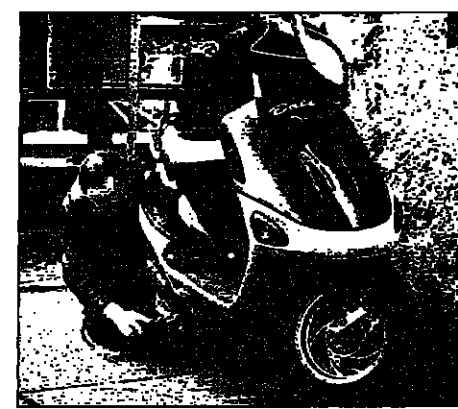
Photos: Matthew Hoffman

How to get there
Charters are available through Italy Sky Shuttle (0181-748 1333) for a fare of around £160 including tax; scheduled flights through the same agency, travelling on Alitalia, cost £205 in April. British Airways has a fare of £213.

Who to ask
The Italian State Tourist Office, 1 Princes St, London W1R 8AY (0171-408 1254).

What to read
Letters from Italy by Goethe (Penguin, 60p); *The Blue Guide to Rome* (A&C Black, £13.99)

That evening we went with some members of the Academy to one of those little trattoria, in Trastevere - managed by the *padrone* and his wife - that the guide books say are disappearing (Hostaria "Gran Sasso", Via S. Francesco a Ripa, 92). Over our dinner of spaghetti vongole, grilled scampi and a delicious version of bubble-and-squeak, the architectural conservator of the Academy, Cristina Puglisi, told me of how Galileo had demonstrated his telescope to some Roman notables from the roof of a small building in the Academy garden that she was in the process of restoring. At first he showed them the craters on the moon, but they were not particularly impressed; then he trained the device on a Latin inscription on the cathe-



dral Church of St John Lateran, visible several miles away from the Janiculum. They were astounded, and acclaimed him a genius. The moral was supposed to be that most people are more concerned about the mundane than the exalted; but for me the point was the simple sightseer's delight in discovering that I was staying where Galileo Galilei had once gone about his business.

Saturday and Sunday were golden days: cloudless empyrean skies allowed a classic Mediterranean light to colour the marble remains of Ancient Rome with delicate tints and sharp shading. On these two days, with the assistance of Doug's *motorino*, I saw and photographed the Roman and Imperial Forums,

the Palatine Hill, the Arch of Constantine, the Colosseum, the baths of Caracalla and the tombs of the Apian Way. Palladio, I soon realised, had seen a very different scene when he stood at these places. Archaeological excavations were just beginning, and much was still buried; on the other hand, a great deal that was there then has since been removed. The sense of half-revealed splendour, however, must have been the same.

Monday morning was devoted to the Pantheon, "the best-preserved monument of Ancient Rome" (*Blue Guide*), and the most important to Palladio. I've been in bigger buildings, of course; but none that felt grander. This may be because of the remarkable proportions: when you stand at the centre of the floor, you are at the bottom of an imaginary sphere whose upper half is the dome. The circular walls that surround you define the diameter of that sphere. The sun passes directly above the open space in the centre of the dome at midday. A moment before noon that day a cloud lifted from the sky, and the building flooded with light.

Flying back to London that evening, I read with wry recognition the concluding remarks from Goethe's Italian letters:

"No one who has not been here can have any conception of what an education Rome is. One is, so to speak, reborn and one's former ideas seem like a child's swaddling clothes. Here the most ordinary person becomes somebody, for his mind is enormously enlarged even if his character remains unchanged."

easter jumbo crossword

by Spurius

Cryptic

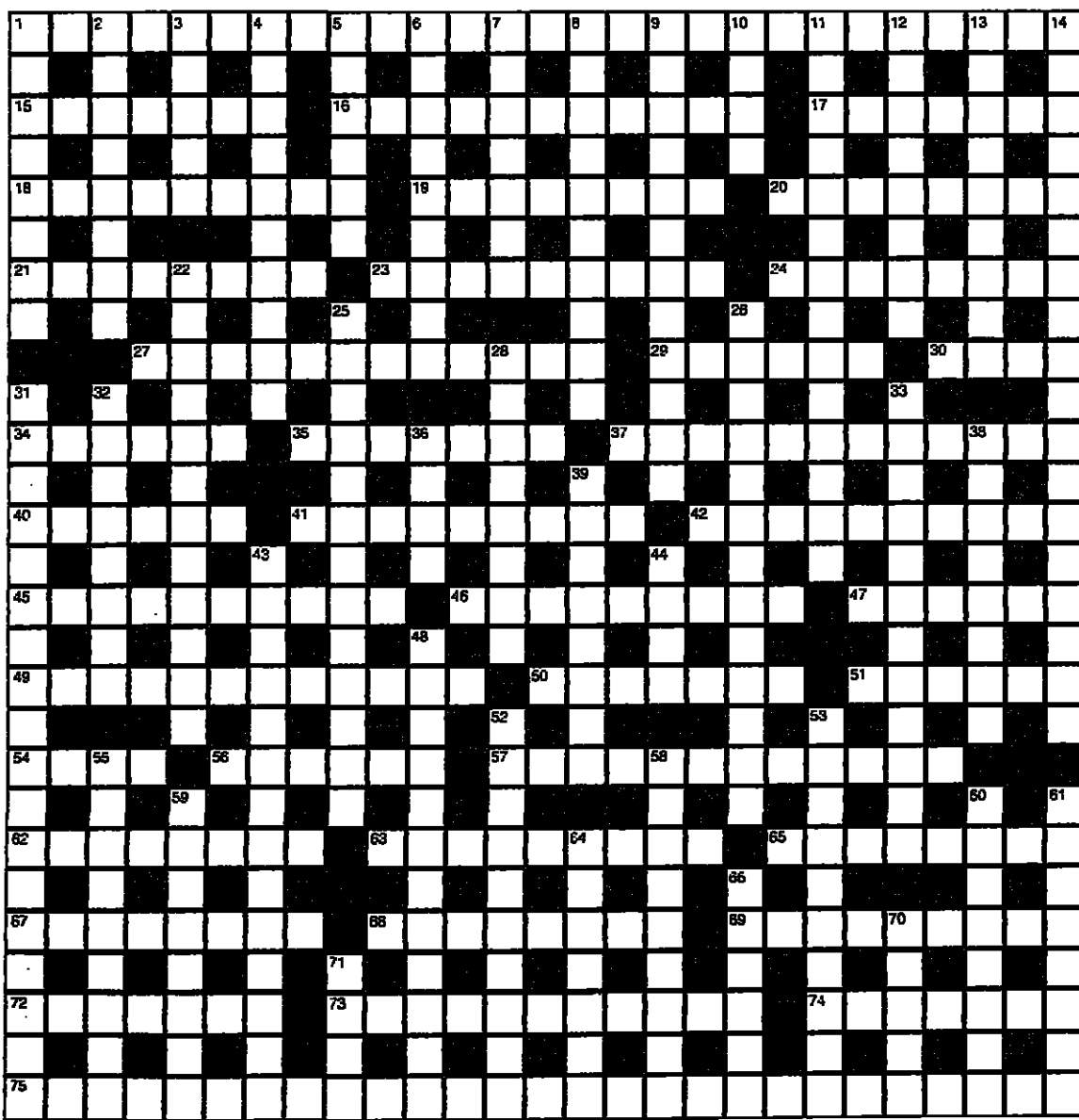
Across

- 1 Get QC to pucker lips when not holding litter-dropper's attention? Impossible! (4,1,4,5,3,2,1,4,3)
- 15 Mature set of people receptive to certain points (5-2)
- 16 Bourgeois keep-fit group concentrating on waistline? (6-5)
- 17 Where to see familiar tank-engine with tender on railway? (7)
- 18 Huckster's daily beat around city (9)
- 19 Kept quiet (8)
- 20 Chap with an old-fashioned air? (8)
- 21 What'll produce generally endless disorder? (8)
- 23 Poking a hooligan in the abdomen as an afterthought? (9)
- 24 Pathetic inducement rejected when there's a lot of money about (8)
- 27 Use of "non-biological" that's lacking theoretical justification? (12)
- 29 Comparatively blessed by worldly inheritance? (6)
- 30 Paper required by area manager (4)
- 34 Period in Office of Strategic Services for group of native Americans (6)
- 35 Man's accepting promissory note without interest (7)
- 37 Ceremonial induction this month gets everyone into a muddle (12)
- 40 Previous record-holder in Carlisle event (6)
- 41 Mock Italian appearing in Greek cloak with front undone (9)
- 42 Style of garment for which we've to thank the *Tailor and Cutter*? (6-4)
- 45 Exercising caution is not primarily signified thereby (10)
- 46 Reduce girl's status (9)
- 47 Arrest Greek character amid some commotion (6)
- 49 Buckinghamshire town's involved in dramatic features presented by Oxford and Cambridge (12)
- 50 Salary put in the post, with gratuity included (7)
- 51 Elevated railway seen from parade? (4-2)
- 54 Theocratic state encapsulated in Irish article (4)
- 56 Doctor's entertained by a junior officer? Not quite (6)
- 57 Go over exciting features of a cup-tie later (12)
- 62 Repository of essential information which may be hard to crack (8)
- 63 Incompetent master NUT deemed due for change (9)
- 65 Gangster in necktie accorded very quick service (8)
- 67 Personal application which may be retracted? (8)
- 68 Scotsman found associating with girl restricts his masculine pride (8)
- 69 What's in the bank I spend too extravagantly (2,7)
- 72 Loth initially to put on American pinafore, becoming yet more vociferous? (7)
- 73 Sadly err, repent it, and give another explanation (11)
- 74 A question applied to a corps one's put in tanks (7)
- 75 In reality, ensuring there's no waste? (5,10,4,3,5)

Down

- 1 Isolated area in which soldier spies for wizard (8)
- 2 Bar-room bobs encountering no obstacle in Kansas (8)
- 3 Girl coming over mid-July having to cancel (5)
- 4 Eagerness, as Bunthorne's bride might have said (10)
- 5 King has one record, but it's got two sleeves (6)
- 6 Suffered rising neo-communist to enter a French territory (9)
- 7 Production of Lassie one's seen somewhere in Germany once? (7)
- 8 Incident in which military leader's given a lot of money by European (10)
- 9 Identify group within society needing vital dietary constituent? (5,7)
- 10 Firm must be quick off the mark (4)
- 11 Top secret factory picked out in mimosas? (9,5)
- 12 Duke conveyed by frigate into custody (8)
- 13 Crustacean caught in river the French find of very poor quality (9)
- 14 Only managerial post re-established in Warwickshire town (5,10,3)
- 22 Several dozen Revs due to be met? (12)
- 25 Purpose is to discourage people blocking motorway (13)
- 26 Type of film censored by hateful regent? (7-6)
- 28 Infant running around Open University's ornamental feature (8)
- 31 Walk with stick? Its members may! (14,4)
- 32 Risk a wet, if careless? (5-3)
- 33 Till we meet in the old corner shop? (4,8)
- 36 Keen on appearing in print, obviously (4)
- 38 Rig tailored for pagan worshipper (8)
- 39 Cream possibly for public consumption (8)
- 43 Type of engine oil, very exciting? (6-8)
- 44 Break in game (4)
- 48 Court will support bishop's office, mostly, on heresy and bigotry (12)
- 52 Suffering chest ailment, as one in grip of chronic TB, possibly? (10)
- 53 British hospital tackled a difficult admission - bubonic plague (5,5)
- 55 Hors d'oeuvres dreadfully inapt with sweet white wine (9)
- 58 Source of fragrance used by

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Concise

Across

- 1 Bank of England (3, 4, 2, 12, 6)
- 15 Engraving (7)
- 16 Hot drink laced with spirit (5, 6)
- 17 Non-native plants (7)
- 18 Apparatus for reducing vapour to liquid form (9)
- 19 Oversight (8)
- 20 Bookish (8)
- 21 Ghostly (8)
- 23 Enthusiastic user of party political catchwords (9)
- 24 Front leg (8)
- 27 Unremarkable quality (12)
- 29 Highland smallholdings (6)
- 30 Surfeit (4)
- 34 Sickness (6)
- 35 Animosity (3-4)
- 37 Persuasively commending oneself to someone's favour (12)
- 40 Peculiarity (6)
- 41 Exclude from society (9)
- 42 Vegetable pickle (10)
- 45 In a longing fashion (10)
- 46 Inconvenience (9)
- 47 Protective headgear (6)
- 49 Relating to art forms which eschew idealization (12)
- 50 Word formed by rearrangement of letters (7)
- 51 At once (6)
- 54 Headland (4)
- 56 Goblin (6)
- 57 Programming for a different time or date (12)
- 62 Concerned with industry or business (8)
- 63 Route (9)
- 65 Stowing away (8)
- 67 Reminded (8)
- 68 Hand joints (8)
- 69 Sound quality (9)
- 72 Girl's name (7)
- 73 Doing away with (11)
- 74 Husbandry (7)
- 75 First line of hymn (3, 6, 4, 2, 5, 2, 5)

Down

- 1 Cloudy (8)
- 2 Drink container (8)
- 3 Remain (5)
- 4 Former Balkan federation (10)
- 5 Monastery (6)
- 6 The common people (3, 6)
- 7 Resounding (7)
- 8 Sleepy feeling (10)
- 9 Flowering (12)
- 10 Legal document (4)
- 11 Branch of physics (14)
- 12 Capable of being turned against the user (3-5)
- 13 Leading article (9)
- 14 RC doctrine (18)
- 22 Three-hundredth anniversary (12)
- 25 Last emperor of Ethiopia (5, 8)
- 26 Passes used by ship or plane travellers (8, 5)
- 28 Selecting or borrowing from a variety of systems (8)
- 31 Shakespeare play (6, 3, 9)
- 32 Fourth part of a circle (8)
- 33 Devices for lessening friction of revolving parts (4-8)
- 36 Hospital room (4)
- 38 Light up (8)
- 39 Amazes (8)
- 43 Desk light (10, 4)
- 44 Banner (4)
- 48 Taking a superficial rather than professional interest (12)
- 52 Written copy (10)
- 53 Clumsy (4-6)
- 55 Device used in burglar alarms etc (9)
- 58 Japanese city devastated in 1945 (9)
- 59 Full (8)
- 60 Smarten up (8)
- 61 Type of paper with slightly rough finish (8)
- 64 Acquire skill or knowledge again (7)
- 66 Goal (6)
- 70 Summer dish (5)
- 71 Venerable monk and historian (4)

The first correct cryptic solution, and the first concise solution, pulled from the sack on 25 April will each win a copy of the new OUP Dictionary of National Biography on CD-ROM. Ten runners up (five cryptic and five concise) will be sent the Dictionary of Euphemisms and the Companion to English Literature. Please mark your entries Easter Jumbo cryptic or concise and send them to: PO Box 4015, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

property

A fortune for your passions

There may be a heavy price to pay for creating your dream home. By Rosalind Russell

Top chef Willi Elsener is giving up the kitchen he has lavished £40,000 on. Tony James, the musician, is leaving behind the mews house and recording studio he employed a top architect to help design. Water ski champion Liz Hobbs and her husband – actor and race-horse breeder Frazer Hines – are looking for a buyer for their Yorkshire home. They've recently paid a fortune for its new designer stableyard. Writer and broadcaster Paul Heiney and his wife Libby Purves are selling the organic smallholding they have sweated over for six years. They have adapted their homes for their abiding passions, yet they have decided to bale out. Not an easy decision.

Finding a new home is no easier. The house Willi Elsener, executive chef at The Dorchester, and his wife Jayne had hoped to buy at auction last week went to a higher bidder. "It was not meant to be, but there will be another one," says Willi, his spirits rising as gently as a soufflé.

Staying put for the time being will be no hardship for the Elseners. Their four-bedroom, two-bathroom house in south-west London is extremely comfortable. "When we bought the house four years ago, the kitchen was a square box with some appliances," says Willi. "Now it's bigger by a third, with warm wooden floors, hand-painted units and gleaming Neff ovens. It was a year in planning."

Spending £40,000 on a kitchen sounds like a lot, but then cooking is my hobby as well as work, I love it," Willi explains. His children are his other passion, as well as the twins he now has a nine-month old daughter – and the family needs more space. The house is being sold through Woolwich Property Services for £279,950.

Property matters are rather different for Tony James, bass player of Generation X. Ten years ago, he bought a mews house in Maida Vale, west London. "It was horrible; hideously and cheaply designed," he recalls. "But I wanted to buy something I could knock down." Janet Street-Porter was his girlfriend at the time and he was impressed by her house, designed by architect Piers Gough. The style was exactly what he'd had in mind: "Modern but sensual."

James worked out his grand design with an architect: a music studio, lots of exposed brickwork and steel girders. A galleryed 22ft main bedroom overlooks the reception room, open to the eaves. It cost more than he cares to reveal.

The brief agreed, James set off on a world tour. "I bought interior design magazines in every town and spent thousands of pounds flying back ideas to the architect," he laughs. "You could say I had a fluid but clear idea of what I wanted." The architect must have had the patience of a saint.

"It's post-modern baroque," suggests James helpfully. Or you might describe it as a post-punk ideal home. "Well, it was designed

as a sex palace. And it worked! I now have a girlfriend who has a nine-year-old son. We have different priorities now," says James. Lurot Brand is asking £195,000 for it.

Paul Heiney's passion was a farm. For six years, he pursued a dream of building and running a traditional, organic smallholding. "It took months to find the right place. For the first time, the house became unimportant and the cowsheds took precedence."

With three Suffolk Punch heavy horses, he ploughed his 35 acres at Vale Farm near Saxmundham. He had no background in farming, but he quickly found himself besotted with the lifestyle. Unlike many farmers, who cobble together sheds from bits of corrugated iron, Paul Heiney and Libby Purves spared no cost. All materials were authentic. And expensive. The project galloped towards a cost of £50,000.

"I had expected it to be hard work," he says. "But I wasn't prepared for the 24-hour-a-day responsibility. The livestock seemed to know when I was going away and would plan an escape. I'd return and someone would knock on the door and say, 'We've got all your sheep back safely.' I didn't know they'd been out." When Libby asked for something expensive, black and sexy as a Christmas present, he gave her Alice, a Large Black pig.

I farmed here for six glorious, exhilarating, exhausting years," says Heiney. "But it was getting wearing." He has one main regret: "With all this BSE mess, I fear I'm letting the side down. I feel I should still be flying the organic flag." Vale Farm, which now has 14 acres, is on the market with Strutt & Parker, at £295,000.

Like the Heiney household, Liz Hobbs and her husband Frazer Hines also spent a fortune making their livestock comfortable. At Ingham Lodge, a single storey ranch-style building converted from former farm buildings, they have successfully bred a string of thoroughbred racehorses; they currently own 10. To accommodate them, they commissioned John Goodrick of York – the top name in designer built stableyards – to build a range of luxury equestrian stables.

"It was a major investment," says Liz Hobbs. "It is the best there is. Then Frazer announced he wanted to move, because he wants to go upstairs to bed. Usually if I keep my head down Frazer forgets all about his ideas. But not this one."

"I love the house and its inglenook fireplace. There is nothing to beat sitting in the conservatory after a fraught day, watching the horses munching grass in the paddock."

The four-bedroom house with beamed interiors and a 29ft conservatory/dining room is on the market with Blenkins & Co and Knight Frank for £275,000. It's unlikely the couple will recoup anything like the cost of their designer stable yard.

"What does it matter," says Liz Hobbs. "We'll just start looking for an old manor house. With stables."



Above: Willi and Jayne Elsener in their £40,000 kitchen. Photograph: Glyn Griffiths

Below: Paul Heiney at his organic farm. 'I wasn't prepared for the 24-hour responsibility.' Photograph: John Lawrence

The cost and value of home improvements

You can spend a fortune doing up your house, but when you sell, will your investment pay off? We asked representatives from Cluttons, Ellis & Co, Folkard & Hayward, Hamptons and Winkworth for their opinions.

Kitchens and bathrooms
Cluttons: A new kitchen increases the value if it is in line with the rest of the property – but not if the rest of the property still needs to be done up.

Winkworth: You could spend £15-20,000 on a designer kitchen, but the added value to the property might be no more than

£5-10,000. On the other hand, at the cheaper end of the market, an attractive kitchen worth £1,600 could add far more than its cost to the value of the property.

Folkard & Hayward: Kitchens and bathrooms are the main things people look at. A shoddy kitchen can make a property unsaleable – £5-10,000 is a good amount to spend.

Conservatories
Winkworth: A conservatory will almost always add value unless it ruins the garden by eating into it too much. Folkard & Hayward: Conservatories are a

waste of time in terms of increasing the value – they might make the property more saleable, but they wouldn't increase the value by more than cost.

Decorating
Cluttons: If a property is newly decorated throughout it will improve the value, but not substantially. It's the location, really, that holds the value.

Ellis & Co: What may devalue a house is someone's esoteric fancy and odd personal taste. If decoration is not to mass appeal the property won't be easy to sell.

Extensions
Cluttons: It depends on where you are, particularly in London where many houses are listed. Extending the rear or putting in a loft extension will increase the value of a house because this creates more floor space – particularly extra bedrooms.

Hamptons: People often over-extend upstairs, over a garage perhaps, and not downstairs. This will not add to the value of a house because it makes an odd combination. If you have five bedrooms and only one reception room the property isn't balanced.

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We're doing 150 mph. He only hits the brakes 200 yards after my foot hit the floor

Roger Bell takes a spin with Frank Biela, World Cup touring car champion



The 1996 Audi A4 in action. Photograph Andrew Redington/Allsport

Brake, man, brake. Frank Biela, World Cup touring car champion, doesn't brake. Instead, he buries the accelerator as we scream through Donington's notorious Craner Curve, a fearsome downhill swoop said to separate the men from the boys. If awe overwhelms plain fear, it is because I have total faith in Biela, the man to beat in this year's British Touring Car Championship. Who better to show me what a BTCC racer can do?

Trussed into the passenger's seat (not normally there) of his Audi A4 quattro, my gaze is torn between the man at the wheel and Donington's familiar ribbon of tarmac, unwinding at fast-forward speed. My head dunks as Biela - like Audi, new to the BTCC car wars - brakes within yards of Old Hairpin, where Nigel Mansell once came to grief. The car flicks right, its slick tyres defying brutal lateral forces bent on pitching us into the crash barrier. We dive into McLeans in a cacophony of clunks and ear-piercing whangs. Without touching the clutch, Biela shifts down three in the blink of an eye. Cop-cop corner is approached over a blind brow at insane speed. He's surely misjudged it. Dunk, clunk-clunk, whaaaang. The frenzy of mechanical mayhem and skull-rocking "g" ruffles me more than the driver.

Hurting down the straight, change-up lights blinking on the dash, Biela scans

instruments that dispense with irrelevant information like speed. I guess we're doing 150mph before he hits the brakes 200 yards beyond where my right foot first heaves against the floor. Is it four or five down-shifts while the mighty anchors do their arresting party trick, wiping away 100mph in a few car lengths? I lose count before the Audi zaps violently through the tight right-left chicane where its four-wheel drive makes the most of over 300 horsepower. We flash past the pits. Redgate corner - and another close encounter - threatens.

Today's BTCC exotics, based on popular mid-range four-door saloons, make cars like the Triumph Dolomite Sprint I once raced look pedestrian. Audi doesn't say what Frank Biela's A4 cost to build, but a factory-backed contender leaves no change from £250,000 according to insiders. And that's just a fraction of a top team's racing budget. Such massive financial commitment is justified because every round of the BTCC, the world's most competitive touring car series, attracts a global television audience of millions. And success on the box translates into sales.

Beneath their war paint, these gladiatorial machines are recognisable as the bread-and-butter models they represent: Audi A4, BMW 318, Ford Mondeo, Honda Accord, Nissan Primera, Peugeot 406, Renault

Laguna, Vauxhall Vectra (displacing last year's Cavalier champ) and Volvo 850 - quickest in pre-season testing. Alas, no Alfias this year. Rover is another notable absentee from a series that will attract 30,000 spectators per race - and even more TV coverage in 1997 to compensate for the BBC's loss of Formula One.

Under the skin, the racers have nothing in common with their showroom counterparts. Getting into the gutted cabin is hampered by a massive tubular cage that provides the driver with safety-cell protection. Following Keith O'Dor's fatal accident last year, side-impact resistance has been substantially increased. All non-essentials like trim, seats and furnishings are discarded. In come fire extinguishers, pneumatic jacks (for quick wheel-changing) and a cam-corder.

The special, ultra-stiff suspension is so low there's barely room for a cigarette paper between tyre and wheelarch. The lock is abysmal, the turning circle huge; parking manoeuvres are best done with a team of pushers. Big, airy aluminium wheels carry low-profile racing tyres - most cars are on Michelins - that stick to tarmac like gum to a pavement. Huge front disc brakes dwarf those of the underworked back ones. A cabin lever adjusts the front/rear braking balance on the move, another the car's suspension. Power steering is essential on

most cars, digital instruments - spurned in the showrooms - de rigueur.

BTCC racers are powered by 2.0-litre engines of not more than six cylinders, restricted for the sake of durability and equality to 8,500 rpm - modest by racing standards. The engine can be "borrowed" from another model, provided it's of the same make. All the teams claim outputs of around 300 horsepower - though some are being economical with the truth. Whatever the figure, race fettle gives at least double the normal output in a car weighing a third less. As a gesture to political correctness, catalytic converters are obligatory. Silencers are not.

Biela's chunky, clutchless shifts, so quick you can't time them, do not betray ineptitude but a tough, unrefined six-speed racing gearbox that compels the use of every ratio in sequence: to change down, you push the tall lever, to change up you pull it. To the driver of an ordinary A4, Biela's 160mph racer would seem less like a car than a sauna-heated exercise gym bedecked as a space capsule: you need to be fit and strong to drive it in anger. It helps to be brave and skilful, too.

The first two rounds of the 26-race Auto Trader BTCC championship take place at Donington on Easter Monday.

So what should you do about your spare tyre?

By Gavin Green

If the first invention in motoring was the wheel, then the longest overdue is a sensible place to put the spare. Car makers have tried almost every place since the first car spluttered into life 100 years ago, and the first tyre splattered into airlessness not long after.

Old cars used to have them in the front wings. They've been in boots, under floors, bolted on to rear doors, on the roof, under seats and under the bonnet. Some makers don't offer them at all, among them McLaren, maker of the priciest car in the world, the £634,500 F1 sports car (nor does it offer a radio: just what do you expect for that sort of money?).

Others offer a risible alternative, the "space saver", which acts as an emergency get-you-home alternative. As the name implies, it is dimensionally challenged. When fitted, it looks like a bicycle wheel. Even worse, it can make your car look (and drive) like a three-wheeler. And as everyone who's ever driven a Reliant Robin knows, that's one wheel too few.

Many people wouldn't know where their car's spare was fitted, let alone how to change it - as the RAC or AA would be only too happy to confirm. The favoured place in small hatchbacks is currently a wire cage under the back of the car.

The French popularised the idea in cars such as the Peugeot 205. One revelation of that excellent little car was the vast boot space. A reason was that there was no spare-sapping spare in it. Instead, it was underneath. This proved popular throughout Europe with people who loved all that extra carrying capacity in the tail. It also proved popular in Britain with thieves who appreciated the exposed nature of a valuable item.

It was a particular problem on the 205 GTi, which had nifty and very covetable alloy wheels. Many 205 GTi owners woke up to find their spare wheels had gone, and found the remains of the wire cage scattered on the ground underneath the car.

Since then, other best-sellers such as the Renault Clio and Ford Fiesta have adopted the same spare-wheel design. Ford admits that, in the

early days, it was surprised how many went missing. Who buys these stolen spares? Unscrupulous wheel(er) dealers and, presumably, some owners who've already been dispossessed and are looking out for cheap replacements.

Security has improved since the early days. The wire cages are stronger and have locks: usually you need to turn a catch inside the boot to free the cage and thus the wheel. Nonetheless, any thief with a strong pair of wire cutters or a good hacksaw will not be deterred.

The other problem with this set-up is the difficult access to the spare. A woman I know arrived late for work last week after getting a flat in her new Fiesta.

"Don't car makers ever think about women," she fumed. "Try bending down so low to get to the spare tyre when you're wearing a tight skirt." I said I'd pass on that challenge but believed her.

Coincidentally, my wife's Renault Clio had a flat soon after. You certainly do need to be flexible of limb and quite strong to squat down under the back of the car to remove the heavy spare from its cage.

I rang Ford, who pointed out that flat tyres are rare. (The Tyre Industry Council reckons a puncture happens on average once every nine years.) "We'd rather give extra boot space," said the Ford spokesman.

That's more important than making an unusual task, such as spare-tyre changing, easier. On all Ford models which are bigger than the Fiesta, in which cabin space is not at such a premium, spare wheels are still kept in the boot area.

Improvements in the strength and durability of tyres mean that punctures are less and less likely to inconvenience us. Probably all we'll need in the future to get us on our way after a flat tyre is a canister of repair spray. It would automatically refuel a flat tyre and seal any holes or small cuts, at least until you got to a garage.

A new tyre would then have to be fitted. A few makers, including Ferrari, already offer just such a solution. The mass makers should follow in about five years.

So what's the answer to the great spare tyre dilemma? It's simple: there won't be one.

road test

Mitsubishi Carisma

This car looks the most tempting of packages. Not only is it a five-seater family hatchback with lots of equipment, low running costs, a bargain price and a three-year warranty, it's a new design from one of Japan's leading car makers. The difference is that the Mitsubishi Carisma is built in Europe - Holland, in fact - in a joint venture with Volvo.

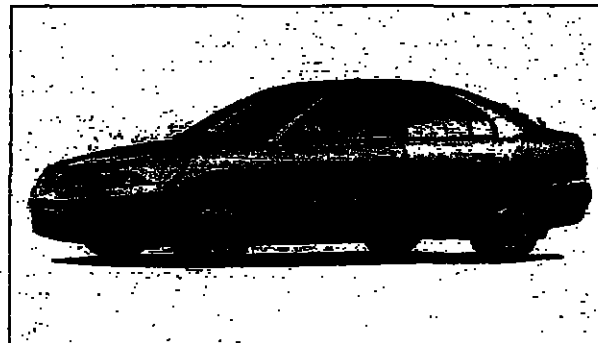
Being EC-built with European sourcing of everything except the engines and the optional automatic gearbox, the Carisma escapes import duty and quota restrictions. This is why it is cheap (cheaper than a Ford Mondeo or a Vauxhall Vectra), and why Mitsubishi is gearing up for 100,000 sales a year across Europe. Its designers claim the Carisma to be the first Japanese car to be developed specifically for Europeans, but they're wrong: that accolade goes to the current, UK-built Honda Accord.

Trouble is, the Carisma doesn't feel quite as Euro-

pean as they think. The styling is less anodyne than that of a Toyota Carina or a Nissan Primera (two more UK-built Japanese transplants), but it is hardly heaped with the sort of personality that would make a weekend car-wash a prime piece of quality time.

Things improve inside, with an oval console forming the centrepiece of a tidy dashboard, but the effect is spoiled by the unremittingly grey, and poorly finished, plastics elsewhere. This is a part of the Dutch-built Volvo legacy (400-series), that Mitsubishi would have done better not to inherit. More of a problem is the lack of head and foot space for rear passengers, whose lounging room is sacrificed to a huge boot.

Two 16-valve engines combine with three trim levels - GL, GLX and GLS - to make up the Carisma range. Prices start at £10,999 for the 1.6 GL and peak at £15,349 for the 1.8 GLS automatic with Diamond Option Pack.



The GLS also comes with a Philips Routefinder, a computerised road atlas which sits atop the fascia. Yet however fine the cross-country routes that the Routefinder devices, you will probably be disappointed by the Carisma's wholly unexceptional drive qualities. It rides smoothly, it squeals over big bumps, but the steering is numb and the Carisma is reluctant to string together a series of bends with any fluidity. It would rather go straight on, given the chance.

John Simister

Specifications

Mitsubishi Carisma 1.8 GLS, £13,499. Engine: 1834cc, four cylinders, 114bhp at 5,500rpm. Five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive. Top speed 125mph, 0-60 in 10.2 seconds. Fuel consumption 30-35mpg.

Rivals

Citroën Xantia 1.8 SX 16V £14,450, Ford Mondeo 1.8 GLX £14,465, Peugeot 406 1.8 LX £13,695, Renault Laguna 1.8 RT £12,670, Vauxhall Vectra 1.8 GLS £14,780

motoring

Registration Numbers

The underlined registration numbers are included in the forthcoming DVLA Auction of attractive registration numbers. If you are considering a bid, why not consult our firm for accurate price guidance? Phone 01257 483205 and we will fax you details of the service and information we offer. Ask to speak with Mr. James Munn, the sole proprietor.

12 AA	13 AB	14 AC	15 AD	16 AE	17 AF	18 AG	19 AH	20 AI	21 AJ	22 AL	23 AM	24 AN	25 AO	26 AP	27 AQ	28 AR	29 AS	30 AT	31 AU	32 AV	33 AW	34 AX	35 AY	36 AZ	37 BA	38 BB	39 BC	40 BD	41 BE	42 BF	43 BG	44 BH	45 BI	46 BJ	47 BK	48 BL	49 BM	50 BN	51 BO	52 BP	53 BQ	54 BR	55 BS	56 BT	57 BU	58 BV	59 BW	60 BX	61 BY	62 BZ	63 CA	64 CB	65 CC	66 CD	67 CE	68 CF	69 CG	70 CH	71 CI	72 CJ	73 CK	74 CL	75 CM	76 CN	77 CO	78 CP	79 CQ	80 CR	81 CS	82 CT	83 CU	84 CV	85 CW	86 CX	87 CY	88 CZ	89 DA	90 DB	91 DC	92 DD	93 DE	94 DF	95 DG	96 DH	97 DI	98 DJ	99 DK	00 DL	01 DM	02 DN	03 DO	04 DP	05 DQ	06 DR	07 DS	08 DT	09 DU	10 DV	11 DW	12 DX	13 DY	14 DZ	15 EA	16 EB	17 EC	18 ED	19 EE	20 EF	21 EG	22 EH	23 EI	24 EJ	25 EK	26 EL	27 EM	28 EN	29 EO	30 EP	31 EQ	32 ER	33 ES	34 ET	35 EU	36 EV	37 EW	38 EX	39 EY	40 EZ	41 FA	42 FB	43 FC	44 FD	45 FE	46 FF	47 FG	48 FH	49 FI	50 FJ	51 FK	52 FL	53 FM	54 FN	55 FO	56 FP	57 FQ	58 FR	59 FS	60 FT	61 FU	62 FV	63 FW	64 FX	65 FY	66 FZ	67 GA	68 GB	69 GC	70 GD	71 GE	72 GF	73 GH	74 GI	75 GJ	76 GK	77 GL	78 GM	79 GN	80 GO	81 GP	82 GQ	83 GR	84 GS	85 GT	86 GU	87 GV	88 GW	89 GX	90 GY	91 GZ	92 HA	93 HB	94 HC	95 HD	96 HE	97 HF	98 HG	99 HH	00 HI	01 HJ	02 HK	03 HL	04 HM	05 HN	06 HO	07 HP	08 HQ	09 HR	10 HS	11 HT	12 HU	13 HV	14 HW	15 HX	16 HY	17 HZ	18 IA	19 IB	20 IC	21 ID	22 IE	23 IF	24 IG	25 IH	26 II	27 IJ	28 IK	29 IL	30 IM	31 IN	32 IO	33 IP	34 IQ	35 IR	36 IS	37 IT	38 IU	39 IV	40 IW	41 IX	42 IY	43 IZ	44 JA	45 JB	46 JC	47 JD	48 JE	49 JF	50 JG	51 JH	52 JI	53 JJ	54 JK	55 JL	56 JM	57 JN	58 JO	59 JP	60 JQ	61 JR	62 JS	63 JT	64 JU	65 JV	66 JW	67 JX	68 JY	69 JZ	70 KA	71 KB	72 KC	73 KD	74 KE	75 KF	76 KG	77 KH	78 KI	79 KJ	80 KK	81 KL	82 KM	83 KN	84 KO	85 KP	86 KQ	87 KR	88 KS	89 KT	90 KU	91 KV	92 KW	93 KY	94 KZ	95 LA	96 LB	97 LC	98 LD	99 LE	00 LF	01 LG	02 LH	03 LI	04 LJ	05 LK	06 LL	07 LM	08 LO	09 LP	10 LQ	11 LR	12 LS	13 LT	14 LU	15 LV	16 LW	17 LX	18 LY	19 LZ	20 MA	21 MB	22 MC	23 MD	24 ME	25 MF	26 MG	27 MH	28 MI	29 MJ	30 MK	31 ML	32 MN	33 MO	34 MP	35 MQ	36 MR	37 MS	38 MT	39 MU	40 MV	41 MW	42 MX	43 MY	44 MZ	45 NA	46 NB	47 NC	48 ND	49 NE	50 NF	51 NG	52 NH	53 NI	54 NJ	55 NK	56 NL	57 NM	58 NO	59 NP	60 NQ	61 NR	62 NS	63 NT	64 NU	65 NV	66 NW	67 NX	68 NY	69 NZ	70 OA	71 OB	72 OC	73 OD	74 OE	75 OF	76 OG	77 OH	78 OI	79 OJ	80 OK	81 OL	82 OM	83 ON	84 OO	85 OP	86 OQ	87 OR	88 OS	89 OT	90 OU	91 OV	92 OW	93 OX	94 OY	95 OZ	96 PA	97 PB	98 PC	99 PD	00 PE	01 PF	02 PG	03 PH	04 PI	05 PJ	06 PK	07 PL	08 PM	09 PN	10 PO	11 PP	12 PQ	13 PR	14 PS	15 PT	16 PU	17 PV	18 PW	19 PX	20 PY	21 PZ	22 QA	23 QB	24 QC	25 QD	26 QE	27 QF	28 QG	29 QH	30 QI	31 QJ	32 QK	33 QL	34 QM	35 QN	36 QO	37QP	38 QR	39 QS	40 QT	41 QU	42 QV	43 QW	44 QX	45 QY	46 QZ	47 RA	48 RB	49 RC	50 RD	51 RE	52 RF	53 RG	54 RH	55 RI	56 RJ	57 RK	58 RL	59 RM	60 RN	61 RO	62 RP	63 RQ	64 RR	65 RS	66 RT	67 RU	68 RV	69 RW	70 RX	71 RY	72 RZ	73 SA	74 SB	75 SC	76 SD	77 SE	78 SF	79 SG	80 SH	81 SI	82 SJ	83 SK	84 SL	85 SM	86 SN	87 SO	88 SP	89 SQ	90 SR	91 SS	92 ST	93 SU	94 SV	95 SW	96 SX	97 SY	98 SZ	99 TA	00 TB	01 TC	02 TD	03 TE	04 TF	05 TG	06 TH	07 TI	08 TJ	09 TK	10 TL	11 TM	12 TN	13 TO	14 TP	15 TP	16 TQ	17 TR	18 TS	19 TU	20 TV	21 TV	22 TV	23 TV	24 TV	25 TV	26 TV	27 TV	28 TV	29 TV	30 TV	31 TV	32 TV	33 TV	34 TV	35 TV	36 TV	37 TV	38 TV	39 TV	40 TV	41 TV	42 TV	43 TV	44 TV	45 TV	46 TV	47 TV	48 TV	49 TV	50 TV	51 TV	52 TV	53 TV	54 TV	55 TV	56 TV	57 TV	58 TV	59 TV	60 TV	61 TV	62 TV	63 TV	64 TV	65 TV	66 TV	67 TV	68 TV	69 TV	70 TV	71 TV	72 TV	73 TV	74 TV	75 TV	76 TV	77 TV	78 TV	79 TV	80 TV	81 TV	82 TV	83 TV	84 TV	85 TV	86
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money

From their peak in the Napoleonic Wars to the 1890s, prices fell continuously. It is only in the second half of the 20th century that we have become accustomed to the idea that prices must rise year in, year out

Is inflation really dead, or simply moribund? It is hard to think of an issue that has greater implications for anyone planning their future investment strategy. For at least a generation, the way we save and spend has been dominated by the need to allow for the impact of persistently rising prices. It has been the age when "real assets", those that appreciate by more than the rate of inflation each year, have commanded an enduring premium.

Chief among these, for most investors, have been shares, property and index-linked gilts. All three types of asset have consistently produced positive real returns over time.

Everyone knows that inflation has been falling. The current level of the Retail Price Index, rising by around three per cent, depending on which of the several measures you look at, is its lowest for well over 25 years. At its peak in the late 1970s, the UK inflation rate topped 25 per cent. This, too, is a global, not just a British, phenomenon. All the leading industrialised economies now have infla-



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

tion rates that are well down on their peaks around 15 years ago. In Japan, inflation has effectively fallen below zero.

But can it last? And what are the implications for investors? These are the questions raised by the well-known City economist Roger Bootle in a new book out this month. As its title, *The Death of Inflation*, implies, Bootle himself has few doubts. His argument is that the inflationary experience of the last 30 years is a historical aberration which is now drawing to a close. In the absence of war (which is always inflationary), or another shock like

the oil price-hikes of the 1970s, he sees no reason to expect inflation to rear its head again in the foreseeable future.

In fact, the main worry now, he says, is that we may be in danger of tipping over into deflation, as the world's central banks - still obsessed with the bogey of the past - compete to squeeze the last drop of inflation out of the system with unnecessarily tight monetary policies. Bootle points out that in the 19th century, when Britain dominated the world economy, nobody expected prices to rise.

In fact, from their peak in the Napoleonic Wars to the 1890s, prices actually fell continuously. It is only in the second half of the 20th century that we have become accustomed to the idea that prices must rise year in, year out. What Bootle thinks will now happen is that he calls "bounded price instability". While prices may fluctuate quite sharply from year to year, as they used to do in the past, on average there will be next to no inflation.

The inevitable consequence of this is that interest rates, too, will

continue to fall from their current levels. It is hard now to remember that as recently as 1951, base rates stood at just two per cent, or that 2.5 per cent Consols (gilts) were once considered good value. Yet historically, long-term interest rates above five per cent are even more of an aberration than inflation above the same level.

Is Bootle right? Needless to say, not everyone agrees with his diagnosis. Prices in the financial markets imply that most investors are still expecting some - admittedly modest - rise in inflation in the next two to three years. Many professionals are worried, with good cause, about the prospect of an artificially generated pre-election boom. Britain's two leading monetarist economists are even now squabbling over whether the recent growth in the money supply points to a new inflationary surge to come.

My impression, however, is that the smart money is increasingly coming round to Bootle's way of thinking. His argument that inflation is being held down by powerful structural changes in the world economy - the spread of informa-

tion technology, increasingly open and competitive markets, and the declining power of organised labour - is well argued and persuasive. Barring accidents, there are good reasons for thinking that the surprises on inflation, when they come, will be on the downside, not the upside.

If Bootle is right, and inflation is actually tamed, not tamed, what follows for investors? His own check list includes the following:

*Avoid taking on unnecessary debt. Inflation is the great friend of borrowers, since the real value of what you borrow can be eroded very quickly. By contrast, if inflation is going to be permanently low, the burden of debt will be much more onerous - and much harder to shift.

*House prices may still grow modestly in real terms, but the great British game of building capital from housing - using depreciating debt to finance a rapidly appreciating asset - is over. Avoid fixed-rate mortgages "like the plague" as interest rates are set to fall further. The fixed rates to look for are on savings and annuities.

*Long-term government bonds become much more attractive investments in a low-inflation environment. Real yields are still high in historical terms, but stick to countries which are not crippled with high debt levels.

*Shares will continue to do well in real terms, but don't expect a repeat of the huge capital gains in money terms we have seen in recent years. By the same token, don't expect pensions and other long-term saving policies (endowments, for example) to produce such high annual returns as they do now.

Bootle suggests that what investors need most of all, however, is a new mindset. A return of five per cent per annum on your savings leaves you no better off when inflation is at or above the same level (in fact, worse off after tax). If inflation is at zero, however, you are being offered what is historically a very high real return indeed. It is time to start thinking that way.

The Death of Inflation, by Roger Bootle, is published by Nicholas Brealey Publishing. £16.99.

The careful way to happy driving

Nigel Richardson looks at the ever-increasing value of hanging on to your no-claims bonus

Many motor insurance premiums are likely to rise over the next few months, bringing to an end the downward trend of the last three years which has begun to put a squeeze on the profits of even most competitive insurers, including Direct Line, the original telephone-based insurer.

So it is an appropriate time for motorists to be reminded of the value of their no-claims bonus. The bonus has evolved into a key rating factor. With discounts as high as 65 per cent or more, the effect on the premium to be paid can come as quite a shock to those who lose their entitlement or are buying their first insurance. Originally, the discount

was introduced as a renewal incentive. Some insurers started to reward policyholders who had not claimed with a 10 per cent discount off their renewal premiums. It remained in place provided the risk remained claim-free but would be lost following a claim, irrespective of the cost or the length of time the client had been claim-free. The discount was

also lost if the client transferred to another insurer. It was not long, however, before some insurers began to realise the marketing value of the discount in attracting careful drivers, and began to tempt new clients by allowing them to keep a bonus they had earned with their existing insurer. Other insurers, particularly the Lloyd's motor syndicates, began offering

not only higher discounts but a scale depending on the length of claim-free driving. Other developments followed, usually as a result of market pressures, until the late Sixties saw discounts rise to present levels.

Basic rates had to rise to compensate for the increased discount, and went up to such a level that it became very expensive for those seeking insurance for the first time. It was particularly unfair for experienced drivers seeking their own insurance for the first time. Hence the introductory NCB was introduced, a discount restricted to first-time policyholders over 25 provided they had regular conviction-free and claim-free driving experience under a full licence.

Clients began to express their discontent when they discovered, following a claim, just how valuable the discount had become. The loss of a full bonus could result in a 150 per cent increase in their premium, an increase that could well exceed the amount of the claim. So the step-back bonus was introduced under which NCB would only be reduced by two years on the scale following a claim. Next came the protected NCB for those with a full discount. In return for a small additional annual premium or an agreement to an excess or a combination of both, insurers would not reduce the bonus provided their client did not make frequent claims, (generally no more than two claims in a five-year period.)

The bonus has probably gone as far as it can - some would say too far. The result is that most motorists now enjoy a maximum discount, and basic rates have had to take this into account. If rates increase by 10 per cent in the next 12 months - which is quite possible - a motorist currently paying a premium of £300 would be facing a renewal premium of £825 next year if he lost his full bonus entitlement.

The bonus needs to be treated with respect, and steps should be taken to try and avoid its loss. Bonus protection options are widely available for a small additional premium but generally you must already be entitled to a full bonus entitlement. Do not, however, then be tempted to make small claims, as by doing so you could use up your entitlement to make two claims in five years before you need to make a large claim, in which case your bonus will be lost.

Prudent drivers should remember to purchase only a policy that "step backs" the bonus in the event of a claim, so that only two years is lost rather than the full amount. This is important even with a bonus protection. Check as well to make certain your policy does not reduce the bonus for broken windscreen claims.

Remember, bonuses are easily transferable at renewal. You need merely send your new insurer the old insurer's renewal notice. However should you cancel a policy, ask the insurer to provide you with confirmation of your bonus entitlement, which a new insurer will usually accept if insurance is taken out again within two years.

If you lose entitlement to a company car, ask your employer to provide a letter confirming your own claim-free history, as this will enable a discount to be secured on a policy in your own name. Do not be tempted to accept a quote purely because it offers a higher level of bonus than another; the lower bonus policy could still be a more competitive policy offering wider cover and a superior claims service.

One final point: although the bonus entitlement is a personal matter, it is earned by the policyholder. Be careful who you allow to drive your car - they could lose the bonus for you.

Nigel Richardson is Motor Schemes Manager at the RAC.



Avoid small claims, as the entitlement to make two in five years could be lost before you need to make a large claim

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LOOSE CHANGE

Royal Bank of Scotland is inviting people to open a new "Royalties" account, offering a package of discounts including automatic accidental death insurance, a one per cent bonus on investment and pension schemes, and five per cent off travel services. The package costs £4 a month, and the discounts could be worth £15 a month. Turkey farmer Bernard Matthews almost made the top 10 most popular share purchased through Fidelity brokerage last month, driving the shares up more than 20p. Hillsdown was also in demand, while Tesco and Sainsbury suffered from the

BSE scare. Glaxo Wellcome, BT, British Gas, Hanson, plus Abbey National, Lloyds TSB and National Grid featured in both buys and sells, GEC and Shell were buys and BAA and BP sells.

Interest rates on three- and four-year bonds continue to rise. London & Edinburgh offers 5.83 per cent net for three years on sums between £3,000 and £10,000. Premium Life offers 5.3 per cent on £1,000 to £5,000 over four years, while Pinnacle Assurance is still offering 6.85 per cent for five years on sums from £3,000 to £5,000. Call 100 and ask for Freephone Bondline.

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ADDRESS _____

Tel (Office) _____

Tel (Home) _____

Date of Birth _____

Postcode _____

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HOMEOWNERS

Operation Mystery Shopper set to expose the great travel cover scam

By Rachel Gordon



Failure to check the small print when buying holiday cover through your travel agent can lead to a right carry-on

Easter is here and many of us are looking forward to a first break of the year. And with a cold snap still in the air, that holiday abroad seems all the more tempting. But even on a short stay, things can go wrong. Falling ill, losing your luggage or the car breaking down are all unpleasant, if unlikely, possibilities. So taking out travel insurance seems like common sense.

But many people, particularly if only going away for a short stay, are reluctant to bother. After all, insurance is a grudge purchase at the best of times. And for a few days away at Easter, is it really worth the effort? Not surprisingly the insurers and travel agents say yes, it most certainly is.

Julie Philpott, marketing director at insurer, Columbus says: "Whether you're planning a weekend on the French Riviera or shopping in New York, insurance should be high on the list of priorities. And it's worth remembering that 80 per cent of the claims we receive at Columbus relate to all kinds of claims which could happen anywhere." She adds that a weekend away in Europe can be covered by a policy costing from £6.95.

But for many travel agents, selling insurance means rich pickings. Some agents offering "bargain" holidays make up the difference – and more – by charging extortionate insurance premiums. But the hard-sell staff often fail to point out that cover may not be tied into the holiday, or that the buyer can shop around. No wonder travel insurance sold by agents now has a bad name.

Fortunately, the scam of hiking up pre-

miums is now in the consumer spotlight following recent investigations by the Office of Fair Trading and the Consumers Association. The CA in particular urges consumers to check small print to see if cover is adequate.

And the Association of British Insurers (ABI) is presently trying to crack the scam by running a "mystery shopper" operation. While results are expected in June, it has already found that some agents had limited knowledge of policy wordings or did not even have a copy of the policy document.

Not surprisingly, the CA recommends buying a separate, stand-alone policy. It explains that travel agents will normally accept these but will want to see it before the holiday is booked.

While there will always be some who for convenience will buy their insurance through a travel agent, Paul Monks, managing director of insurer and assistance company, Europ Assistance, says a growing number are becoming increasingly aware of their insurance needs. "Many people have seen through the spoof of travel agents' cover and realise it is not good value," he said.

It is this attitude which has led to Europ Assistance's "pick and mix" travel insurance packages. This means you can choose what parts of a policy you need, and save money by avoiding those you don't.

For example, Monks points out many people already have baggage cover under their home contents insurance. Health costs might be covered under a private medical insurance policy. And if you book your Easter break the day before

you are due to leave, cancellation cover hardly seems necessary.

Now is also a good time to consider multi-trip or annual cover. For frequent travellers, Monks says this can be good value and he has seen a 20 per cent growth in the area over the last six months. This is based on a yearly fee, regardless of the number of trips you make. Sarah Ioannides, marketing manager of insurer Home & Overseas, says many people can afford to take two holidays a year plus weekend breaks. With policies sold through many banks and building societies, an annual policy, she says, can cost around £120 and can be upgraded to cover riskier activities such as skiing.

Winter sports may be over, but some may be planning equally risky activities this Easter. Insurance for these is available and P J Hayman, for example, provides a specialist policy, "Adventures". This covers most activities from diving, to learning to fly to rock climbing or bungee jumping. For most unusual needs, the brokers' trade body, BIIBA, can also recommend an experienced insurance adviser.

For more leisurely holidays, it is still worth travellers being prepared for the worst disaster. Not the least requirement is obtaining an E111 form, which is a reciprocal arrangement aimed at Britons on holiday in the EU. This is available from the Post Office. But it is worth remembering that this only covers emergency treatment, and does not include repatriation costs.

And even a few days spent motoring is not without its risks. Taking your car abroad raises the thorny issue of Green

Cards. This is a document used as proof that a driver's minimum legal requirements are covered by their motor insurance policy. While there is no direct charge, an insurer or broker will often make an administrative charge, and it can also mean a wait for it to be sent out to the policyholder.

Tony Baker, deputy director general of the ABI, states that all motor policies sold in the UK provide the minimum cover required by law in EU states. Policies also extend to the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. But Green Cards are recognised documents in many countries – often more so than a UK insurance policy – and so might prevent misunderstandings when abroad. And Baker advises that minimum cover may not include fire, theft or damage to the policyholder's own car. This means a policy extension needs to be bought, and the insurer should be contacted to arrange improved cover. The ABI has produced an information sheet, "Taking Your Car Abroad – The Insurance Facts", which explains Green Cards in detail.

Perhaps the best bet is to make sure your car is in good order before you travel. Cornhill Insurance reports that calls to its offices are 25 per cent higher on the Tuesday after Easter than normal.

Columbus – 0171 422 5505
Europ Assistance – 0181 680 1234
Home & Overseas – 0171 434 3002
ABI – 0171 600 3333
P J Hayman – 01730 260222
BIIBA – to recommend an independent broker – 0171 623 9043

Treasured Easter gift from the monarch

By John Andrew

Only hours after the Cabinet proposed a referendum in the case of Parliament agreeing to replace pounds with euros, the Queen was at Norwich Cathedral, giving away bags containing Maundy money – 70 pence in silver coins to 70 men and 70 women, one for each year of the Queen's age.

A set comprises a groat, or fourpenny piece, a threepenny, twopenny and a penny. The latter is about the size of a shirt button. The nominal value of each set is 10 pence, so each of the men and women this year received seven complete sets. They were handed to the recipients in white leather bags. Officials at the ceremony were also given Maundy coins.

Nevertheless, only about 1,600 complete sets will have been struck this year. This is a small mintage when compared to even a limited edition of a collector's coin.

The majority of the coins presented to the men and women, who were chosen because of their outstanding service to the Church and the community, will be cherished and treated as treasured heirlooms.

As the coins are scarce in the market, one would expect the sets to sell at high prices. Spink, the London coin dealers, expect that 1996 sets will retail for around £90. However, by next year their price is likely to have dropped to £50 as the demand from collectors seeking the latest issue has been satisfied.

According to Spink's Mark Rasmussen, earlier Maundy money is as rare as hens' teeth in choice condition. The four denominations of the same date in mint state would cost up to £500 if their colour (colour) was perfectly matched. If in "fine" condition, which actually means having considerable wear, the price would be about £70.

However, a near mint state late Victorian example would sell for around £40, because it had become the practice for the general public to be allowed to purchase sets through banks. In 1909, Edward VII commanded that this should cease as it reduced the value of coins to recipients. The effect was dramatic. In 1908 18,150 silver pennies were struck; the following year the number was 2,948.

From the reign of George V, the number of complete sets struck has never exceeded 2,000. Despite these low mintages, sets from 1911 generally sell for around £40 to £50. The exception is the 1953 set, which is keenly sought: it was the Coronation year and the portrait of the Queen differs from that of subsequent years.

Given that both the number of recipients and the number of coins given to each recipient increases with the monarch's age, one would expect earlier examples of the current reign to be worth more than later ones. However this overlooks both the number of sets given to officials each year and the make-up of the coins given to each recipient. In 1966, 1,206 complete sets were struck while the following year the number was only 986. Interestingly, Seaby's *Standard Catalogue* lists both dates at £50.

Any market where the material is scarce can be quickly distorted if there is a surge in demand. Any collectible which rapidly increases in price is sure to fall at a later date. However, at current levels, the modern sets certainly have investment potential.

John Andrew is the Consultant Editor of *Coin News* (price £2). Readers of the Independent may obtain a free copy by sending stamps to the value of 42p, together with their address, to: *Token Publishing, PO Box 14, Honiton, Devon EX14 9YP*.

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money

Best borrowing rates

Telephone	% Rate and period	Max adv %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption penalty
Fixed rates					
Scarborough BS	0800 590547	0.25 for 1 year	70	0.75%	—
Skipton BS	01756 700500	3.75 to 30/4/98	75	£295	Unemp insurance + B&C insurance
Variable rates					
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	7.24 to 1/5/01	95	£295	—
Hindley & Rugby	0800 774489	0.11 for 9 mths	70	—	Free val, 3 yrs unemployment ins
Principality BS	01222 344188	1.00 to 1/5/97	90	—	—
Halifax BS	0800 101110	4.45 to 30/4/99	90	—	Free valuation
First time buyers fixed rates					
Bristol & West BS	0800 100117	0.95 to 30/4/97	90	£275	—
Mortgage Trust	0800 550551	5.95 to 31/3/99	95	£295	£350 cash rebate
Furness BS	01229 824560	7.45 to 2/4/01	95	£250	Refund valuation fees
First time buyers variable rates					
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500	0.99 to 1/5/97	90	£295	Refund valuation fee
Principality BS	01222 344188	3.60 to 1/5/98	90	—	—
Halifax BS	0800 101110	5.89 to 30/6/01	95	95	£500 & free val

Telephone	APR	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 years)
Unsecured		
Yorkshire Bank	0113 231 5324	14.60
Direct Line	0141 248 9966	14.90E
Midland Bank	0800 180180	14.90
Secured (second charge)		
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	7.40
Royal B of Scotland Via branch	9.00	70%
First Direct	0800 242424	9.50

Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	Unauthorised % pm	APR
Unsecured				
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76	9.5
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Current	0.76	9.5
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.79	9.9

Telephone	Card	Min %	Rate	APR	Annual period	Int. free
Standard						
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.92	11.50	—
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	1.00	14.00	56 days
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	—	1.22	15.60	56 days
Gold cards						
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.50	10.50	46 days
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05H	14.50H	46 days
NatWest Bank	0800 200400	Visa	£20,000	1.14	15.90	56 days

Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods
John Lewis		
in store	—	—
01244 681681	1.87	24.80
01244 681681	1.94	25.90

APR Annualised percentage rate.
 A. If company's buildings and contents insurance taken.
 B. Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years.
 C. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 D. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 E. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 F. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 G. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 H. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 I. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 J. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 K. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 L. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 M. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 N. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 O. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 P. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 Q. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 R. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 S. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 T. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 U. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 V. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 W. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 X. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 Y. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.
 Z. Annual fee waived after first year if £4K+ charged to card during previous year.

Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Fixed rates					
Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£100	4.80 Year
Skipton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£2,500	5.10 Year
Skipton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£15,000	5.25 Year
Skipton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£30,000	6.00 Year
Variable rates					
Yorkshire BS	0800 378836	First Class Access	Postal	£1,000	5.00 Year
Northern Rock BS	0900 505000	Great North Postal	Postal	£5,000	6.25A Year
Northern Rock BS	0900 505000	Great North Postal	Postal	£10,000	6.50A Year
Northern Rock BS	0900 505000	Great North Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.75A Year
First time buyers					
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 391497	Postal 10	10 day P	£10,000	6.10 Year
Coventry BS	0345 665522	Postal 50	50 day P	£2,000	5.45 Year
Scarborough BS	0800 590578	Scarborough 75	75 day	£1,000	6.30 Year
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	120 Account	120 day	£25,000	6.75 Year
Co-operative Bank					
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Pathfinder	Instant	£5,000	5.00 Month
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Instant Access	Postal	£25,000	5.79 Month
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Postal 50	50 day P	£25,000	6.15 Month
Co-operative Bank	0800 590578	Scarborough 75	75 day	£1,000	6.10 Month

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Fixed Rate Bonds			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Fixed Rate Bond	1/6/98
Stroud & Swindon BS	0345 252423	Fixed Rate Bond	2/4/99
Bristol & West BS	0800 202121	Fixed for Three	3 Year
Bristol & West BS	0800 202121	Fixed for Three	3 Year

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

Telephone	Account	Rate	Term
Classic Postal			
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	01202 502404	HICA	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant

FEAR OF FINANCE
Clifford German

The rush to open accounts which qualify for voting membership of medium-sized building societies started to subside three months ago after the newly appointed group chief executive of the Woolwich, Peter Robinson, who so spectacularly came to grief this week, arbitrarily excluded recently opened accounts from voting membership.

At the same time most societies sharply raised the amount of money needed to open a qualifying account or simply shut the most popular accounts to new investors and forced them to open non-qualifying accounts which do not benefit from conversions.

The Nationwide, the Britannia, Bradford & Bingley and the Coventry actively sought to make themselves less attractive to speculators by cutting mortgage rates, raising savings rates and reducing profit margins in moves designed to re-affirm a commitment to mutual status and make the business less profitable and less appealing to predators.

Together they did seem to have stifled the speculation. All that has now been revived after Northern Rock announced its board has collectively changed its mind and is now actively considering a float. Within hours the Bristol & West was also admitting that becoming a bank was one of the options it is considering, a statement which effectively means that pass has also been sold.

Now it is simply a matter of seeing whether the wagon-train gets across the plain to the safety of a successful float, which guarantees five years of survival as an independent body, or whether a war-party of takeover bidders ambush it first.

It is too late to open a qualifying account with Northern Rock, and Bristol & West could impose a retrospective qualifying date if a rush starts to open new accounts today.

Pressure is now likely to build on the Nationwide, which is clearly big enough to convert alone. If Northern Rock can float alone so could the Bradford & Bingley and Britannia, and maybe even the Birmingham & Midshires and the Yorkshire.

Even more likely is a round of mergers, which bring few immediate benefits to members, in the hope of forestalling takeovers, which can be as lucrative to members selling out their independence as converting to banking status.

The days of making the best part of £1,000 worth of shares or cash incentives on a strategic investment of as little as £100 are gone. In most places it is now necessary to put more into an account than it is likely to yield, and in many cases it will be necessary to wait for as long as 18 months before a windfall is paid out. But returns of 60-70 per cent over 12-18 months could still be obtained for a lucky guess on who goes next.

Ironically, if there is a new rush to tie up £1,000 here and £1,000 there it is likely to have a direct and adverse impact on the cash many small investors have been setting aside for the Railtrack and British Energy flotations.

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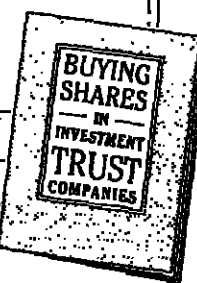
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The Equitable L

A classic case of off-road obstacles

Corinne Simcock hears a tale of costly indulgence from the man who leads Daewoo's advertising campaign

Charlie Dawson, 29, is a board account director with the advertising agency Duckworth, Finn, Grubb, Waters, which has 50 employees and £50m billing. He joined the industry in 1989 as a Saatchi & Saatchi graduate recruit after leaving Cambridge with a First in manufacturing engineering. Today he heads up the Daewoo Cars account.

In 1989 I was left some money. I put part of it into buying a flat and decided to indulge myself by buying a classic car. A friend of a friend was a car dealer who had a 1973 Jensen-Healey going for £5,000, so I went to have a look. It was a black two-seater convertible that looked a bit ugly and I fell in love with it immediately.

Instead of spending a couple of hundred pounds on an official inspection, I got a mechanic who had worked on my previous car to have a look. Unfortunately it was dark by the time he arrived and none of us had a torch, but he felt around a bit and spotted a couple of faults, so I made it a condition of sale that the dealer got them fixed.

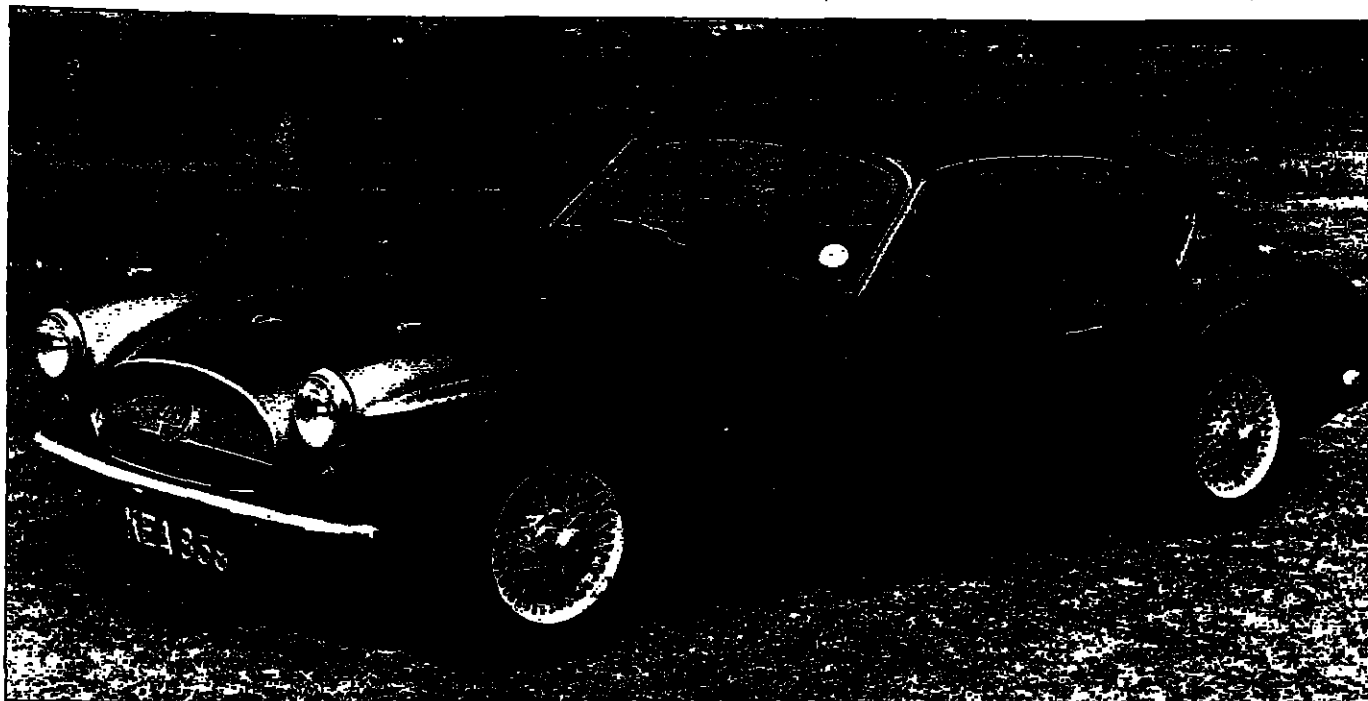
It also needed a respray, and because I trusted the guy, I said that if he came across anything else that needed doing, he should go ahead and stick it on the bill. I ended up paying £6,500. Three months later I noticed that the whole car had started twitching when I changed gear. I spotted a huge bit of metal hanging off between the wheels, so I had the car towed to a specialist garage.

By the time I got to my office, the garage had already phoned to ask how quickly I could return. When I got there, the car was up on a ramp and they showed me the underneath. The suspension was attached to the body with big lumps of glass fibre, not by bolts.

It looked like someone had deliberately tried to conceal what they had done. In the mechanics' opinion the car was potentially lethal and should never have passed an MOT. The whole floor would need to be replaced before it could be driven again.

Feeling a court case coming on, I paid the RAC £200 to come and have a look. The inspector said it was one of the worst cases he had ever seen and suggested that I sue.

It turned out that you can only sue the garage which has issued an MOT within a



Splashing out on a classic car such as this Jensen Healey can be the start of a long and expensive journey

Photograph: Newsfilm

month of the inspection. By then I had had the car for more than three months. We continued to try to sue the dealer, a process which lasted for more than a year. Eventually, though, I was told that since I had had a mechanic inspect the car before I bought it, my chances of winning were only 50/50.

I could have sued the mechanic instead, but he was self-employed and he had done a lot of work for me over the years. That was another lesson: you should only pay for the services of people you are prepared to sue.

Given that I had had no luck so far, I decided to spend the money that remained on the car and not the legal system. The specialist garage quoted £4,000 to replace the floor, so I told them to go ahead. I only found out later that VAT was not included, and it ended up costing £5,500.

At last, 18 months after buying the car, I was going to be able to drive it again. Unfortunately, just as I went to collect it they

noticed a problem with the engine, and it needed to be completely rebuilt. By now I was a touch distraught. I had spent £12,000 on this car; I couldn't throw it away to save £4,000. It had long ceased to be an investment, but at least if I got it fixed I could drive it.

It took more than a year for the engine to be rebuilt, and the bill came to more than £6,000. Unbelievably, even after I picked it up I discovered faults elsewhere. Fortunately, I found a specialist mechanic near Doncaster who was absolutely brilliant.

Unfortunately, I live in London. The car needed to be serviced every 3,000 miles, so I took to driving half-way up the A1 at frequent intervals. By the spring of 1995 I had spent a total of £22,000 and driven about 15,000 miles. It would have been cheaper to have been driven around in a taxi for five years.

Financially, I could only justify what I had

done if I was to hang on to the car for the rest of my life, but my long-suffering partner and I had decided to have a baby and it just wasn't practical. I managed to find a buyer who agreed to pay £5,500, but he wanted an inspection first. I wasn't too worried because virtually every part had been replaced by now.

But I had forgotten the respray that had been carried out by the dealer who sold it to me – and it was hiding a multitude of sins. The buyer reduced his offer. When I finally sold it to him for £3,500, I had lost around £8,500, and I was deliriously happy because at last I couldn't lose any more.

A classic car is a high-risk non-investment if you're determined to drive it; lots can go wrong and running costs are high. I had hoped it would rise in value at a little over the inflation rate. My intention was to protect my capital, a bit like leaving it in a building society. Instead, it cost me all the money I'd been left.

Trusts look for Eastern promise

By Clifford German

Asian issues dominate the current list of new investment trusts offered by Nigel Sidebottom at GVG Asset Management. Fidelity Asian Values is managed by K C Lee, who also runs their existing South-east Asia unit trust. The fund will invest in the Far East excluding Japan, the placing and public offer includes one free warrant with every five shares.

Investors looking for a recovery in Japan should consider Gartmore's Select Japanese Investment Trust, managed by Mark Fawcett who runs the existing unit trust, which is a risk-averse fund.

Atlantis Japan Growth Fund managed by former Schroder fund manager Ed Mermer is dollar-denominated and Guernsey-based, and London-listed. It will invest in small and medium companies and aim for capital growth.

Renaissance US Growth and Income Trust will invest mainly in companies with a market capitalisation of under \$100m. The issue is through a placing with institutions only and several similar trusts already stand at significant discounts to net asset value.

A number of investment trusts in the UK smaller companies sector are issuing "C" shares. The highly successful Invesco English & International Trust is making a public offer of up to £30m worth of "C" shares, but there are no warrants, and small investors could find the existing shares a cheaper way in as they stand at a small discount to net asset value. Montanaro Smaller Companies is raising up to £30m in shares plus warrants through a placing only.

The high-performing Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust is making an offer for subscription of "C" shares available. There is only a 97 per cent conversion factor available but the inclusion of warrants available on conversion should largely offset this, say GVG.

Carnegie Building Societies Investment Trust aims to invest mainly in irredeemable high-interest bearing Permanent Interest Bearing Shares (PIBS) issued by mutual building societies, with the balance in debt securities and cash. The trust hopes to benefit from the trend to conversion and commercialisation of building societies, including the Woolwich and National & Provincial.

TR Pacific Investment Trust is offering shares to holders of Thornton Asian Emerging Markets, excluding the investment in China Vest II for which a separate offer is being made. Accepting shareholders will pay a premium of 3 per cent to the net asset value of TR Pacific. A cash alternative of 96 per cent of Thornton's net asset value is available.

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Taxman ready to reward efficiency

By Clifford German

The taxman might offer discounts to taxpayers who fill their forms promptly and pay their tax demands on time to help the Inland Revenue smooth out the peaks and troughs of work once self-assessment is up and running next year. Don't hold your breath, but without some form of incentive the slimmed-down staff could otherwise face a massive burden of work concentrated on and after the two new yearly deadlines at the end of September and January.

New-style forms requiring more detailed information go out in April next year to the 9 million people who currently receive an annual return. Self-assessment is something of a misnomer because all taxpayers who want their tax office to continue to calculate the actual tax due on the basis of the information supplied, are free to do so and wait for their assessments in the normal way, although they will have to submit their completed returns for the year ending in April by 30 September. They will then receive tax bills, which should be paid by the end of January.

Anyone who is willing to go all the way and calculate his or her own tax liability can send in the forms, together with a cheque for what they think they owe before the end of January. Late returns are liable to be penalised by a fine.

A trial run took place with 5,000 in Leicester last year, and a further dummy run is due this year with 17,000 volunteers in Southampton and Leicester. Last year's results show that 94 per cent of the Leicester volunteers gave enough information for their affairs to be processed without further enquiries.

But only 49 per cent had filed by the end of September, and another 30 per cent by the end of January, only slightly more than currently meet the deadline for first instalments. It still means one in five of the volunteers who took part in trials last year in Leicester failed to get their forms back on time. Excuses ranged from the usual "sill waiting for some vital information", to confusion over the dates.

The Inland Revenue's acting director Clive Corlett points out that 35 per cent of all taxpayers fail to meet the existing deadline, so the trial shows an improving trend. There are also no penalties to spur the volunteers. Publicity and penalties could concentrate minds further when self-assessment begins in earnest next year. The Inland Revenue is planning local "Tax Weeks" to publicise self-assessment and make taxpayers more aware of the helplines which will be available.

But there is also the ongoing problem of the hard core of 10 per cent of taxpayers who never return their forms and have to be pursued at great expense by the taxman. By definition none of them will have volunteered for the Leicester test, and if they are included the sample figures might look significantly worse.

Meanwhile, however, the results from Leicester also suggest that while 10 per cent of those who do not employ accountants said that self-assessment might force them to do so in future, a remarkable 25 per cent of those who do use accountants now said they thought the new forms and the accompanying instructions had so successfully de-mystified the tax return that they could dispense with professional help in future. That is likely to concentrate accountants' minds.

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Sunday television and radio

BBC1

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 6.05 **Regional News** (521804).
 6.10 **Songs of Praise**. From York Minster to celebrate Easter Day (S) (891991).
 6.45 **Antiques Roadshow**. From Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire (S) (13210).
 7.30 **Hamish Macbeth**. Isobel goes after a story which could be her big scoop (S) (460465).
 8.20 **Over Here**. 1/2. See Preview (S) (4650113).
 9.50 **News: Weather** (76755).
 10.05 **Ruby Wax Meets...** Heidi Fleiss. See Preview (S) (852705).
 10.35 **The Nose at Ten - Best of Comic Relief**. Jo Brand introduces more comedy highlights (S) (752755).
 11.05 **Heart of the Matter**. Joan Bakewell visits Jerusalem to explore the historical evidence surrounding the story of Jesus (462194).
 12.00 **Lethal Charm** (Richard Michaels 1991 US). Barbara Eden and Heather Locklear struggle to convince as investigative reporters in the White House press corps (S) (89359).
 1.30 **Weather** (561934). To 1.35am.
REGIONS. Wales: 12.00am Squash. 12.30 Film: Lethal Charm. 2.00 News: Weather.

BBC2

- 7.30 **Children's BBC**. Jim Henson's Animal Show. 7.55 Playdays. 8.15 Follow That Bus. 8.45 Postman Pat. 9.10 Rupert. 9.15 The All New Popeye Show. 9.40 Phantom 2040. 10.05 The Littlest Pet Shop. 10.30 Grange Hill. 10.55 The Art and Dec Show. 11.20 Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show.
 11.45 **Star Trek** (R) (9578465).
 12.35 **The O Zone** (S) (3902620).
 1.05 **Singled Out**. Dating show American-style (S) (7934799).
 1.30 **They Were Expendable** (John Ford 1945 US). Classic war movie, shot with passion and insight by Ford, who had served in the Navy himself - and indeed was still seconded, Robert Montgomery and John Wayne man the American motor torpedo-boats in the Philippines in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor (50496007).
 3.40 **Rugby Special**. John Inverdale presents highlights of Gloucester v Bristol (S) (1117587).
 4.40 **Argentinian Grand Prix**. Live commentary from Buenos Aires (S) (8220007).
 7.15 **Screen Firsts: He Shoots, He Scores** (382262).
 7.25 **Bookmark**. The concluding part of Sean O'Meara's impressive biography of Samuel Beckett. See Preview (S) (206194).
 8.20 **Fantasy Football League**. Angus Deayton and Zoe Ball share the lads' sofa (R) (S) (791281).
 8.50 **Down the Street of Dreams**. Documentary about a boxer (S) (2529945).
 10.00 **Argentinian Grand Prix Highlights** from Buenos Aires (S) (971007).
 10.40 **Thunderheart** (Michael Apted 1992 US). Powerful thriller set in the mid 1970s in which FBI agent Val Kilmer - in denial of his part-Sioux nationality - is sent by cynical superior Sam Shepard to investigate a murder at an American Indian reservation in South Dakota (Followed by Weather) (68856484).
 12.40 **Film: Sadgati** (Satyajit Ray 1981 Ind). Politically very direct film from the great Ray, telling of a high-caste bully working a low-caste labourer to death. Om Puri and Mohan Agashar star (6326779). To 1.25am.
 2.00 **The Learning Zone: Learning Zone: Community Programmes**. Season - a Sense of Britain. The Edge (66311). 2.30 Open Space (854466). 3.00 Open Space (42156). 3.30 Over the Edge (76798). 4.00 Languages: Business Language Show (50589). 5.00 Business and Work: Open Space (26088). 5.30 Business Matters (13069). To 6.00am.
REGIONS. Wales: 3.40pm Scrum 5. Nt. 1.30pm Now You're Talking. 1.55 Film: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

ITV/London

- 6.00 **GMTV 6.00** The Sunday Review. 6.30 News and Sport. Presented by Anne Davies. 7.00 The Sunday Programme (S) (5200).
 8.00 **Disney Club**. Guests include Pauline Quirke and actor/singer John Alford (S) (82213945).
 10.15 **Link** (S) (5392587).
 10.30 **Morning Worship**. From the Roman Catholic cathedral in Brentwood, Essex (S) (27804).
 11.30 **Blessed Are They**. The Dalai Lama reflects on the Christian concept of meekness (S) (6717281).
 11.55 **Chalkie Talk** (S) (8518026).
 12.30 **Daffy Duck's Easter Show** (R) (3919910).
 12.55 **Local News, Weather** (8915191).
 1.00 **News, Weather** (42097674).
 1.10 **The Easter Enigma**. Sir David Frost and guests - including the Archbishop of Canterbury - search for the truth behind the resurrection story. Good luck (3788216).
 2.00 **Murder, She Wrote**. A writer is found dead. No, not that one, unfortunately (3036026).
 2.55 **The Scarlet and the Black** (Kenneth Colley 1983 US). The true story of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, a Vatican official who concealed thousands of Allied POWs in German-occupied Rome. Stars Gregory Peck, Christopher Plummer and John Gielgud (92806129).
 5.15 **The London Programme**. The capital's firemen and women and how they're coping with budget cuts (5847823).
 5.50 **London Tonight** (774216).
 6.15 **News, Weather** (582674).
 6.30 **Surprise! Surprise!** (S) (74552).
 7.30 **Doctor Finlay**. An ex-colonial couple recently returned from India give reason to worry. Who is their daughter and why is the husband so against any contact with her? (S) (88939).
 8.30 **You've Been Framed!** (R) (S) (3718).
 9.00 **Band of Gold**. Collette turns to Rose for help as the drugs finally wear down Tracy (S) (6939).
 10.00 **News, Weather** (871007).
 10.15 **The South Bank Show Special: Elaine Paige**. Melvyn Bragg does the honours (S) (340129).
 11.45 **Theatreland**. Miss Julie at the Young Vic, and an interview with Mandy Patinkin (899910).
 12.15 **Stargate** (20953).
 12.45 **Perfect People** (Bruce Seth Green 1988 US). Comedy about an ageing couple who panic about losing their youth and start a crash programme to improve their looks (574155).
 2.30 **In Search of a Golden Sky** (Jefferson Richard 1984 US). Social services snatch three orphans from their loving old uncle (685427).
 4.15 **ITV Sport Classics II** (40694205).
 4.30 **Shift** (R) (8156514).
 5.30 **News** (67345). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

- 6.15 **Trans World Sport (R)** (6586200).
 7.10 **Take 5**. With *The Magic Roundabout*, *Bush Tails*, *Natalie*, *For The Engine* and *Joggy Bear* (S) (5338125).
 7.40 **The Magic School Bus** (S) (7789910).
 8.05 **Sonic the Hedgehog** (1506620).
 8.35 **The Trap Door** (4414668).
 8.40 **Blast Off** (3028705).
 8.50 **Blister Mice from Mars** (R) (8834945).
 9.15 **The Secret World of Alex Mack** (S) (726465).
 9.45 **Dumb and Dumber**. The cartoon version of the successful Jim Carrey movie (2867194).
 9.55 **Insectors**. Award-winning new series about an eccentric fantasy world of insectile characters (6919858).
 10.15 **Sister Sister**. US sitcom (S) (813945).
 10.45 **The Legend of the Hawaiian Slammers** (S) (812216).
 11.15 **NBA Raw**. The New York Knicks v Orlando Magic (799571).
 12.15 **Mission Impossible** (240151).
 1.15 **Ali Dogs Go to Heaven** (Don Bluth 1989 US). Animation by Disney rival Bluth, about a dog who dies and goes to heaven (S) (9652552).
 2.50 **How Green Was My Valley** (John Ford 1941 US). The Welsh valleys as created at the 20th Century Fox backlot, in Ford's sentimental, sometimes genuinely moving version of Richard Llewellyn's novel of turn-of-the-century coal mining life. Stars Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara, Oscar-winning Donald Crisp and Roddy McDowall (89102397).
 5.00 **The Pink Panther Show** (7151).
 5.30 **Hollyoaks** (R) (S) (197).
 6.00 **Guiliver's Travels**. See Preview (S) (56453281).
 7.45 **Traveling Sandi**. See Preview (S) (993552).
 8.00 **Encounters: The Treasure of the Humboldt Glacier**. The adventurous story of aircraft dealer Danyel Greenaway, who planned to recover the abandoned American B29 bomber that crashed near the North Pole in 1947 (S) (8045).
 9.00 **Suicide Island**. Repeated Secret History film about how, when US Marines invaded the Pacific island of Salpian in 1944, hundreds of Japanese civilians committed suicide by jumping from a high cliff into the sea (R) (7281).
 10.00 **The Crying Game** (Neil Jordan 1992 UK). See *The Big Picture* (S) (30674755).
 12.05 **Football Italia** (5688750).
 1.05 **Burning Memory** (Yossi Soffer 1989 Isr). Soffer's feature film debut, based on his own experiences during the Lebanon War. Danny Roth plays a soldier who is sent to a rehabilitation hospital (286868). To 2.40am.

ITV/Regions

- WELSH**
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (474651). 2.00 Highway to Heaven (2000202). 2.55 RJ Mitchell - Birth of a Spitfire (1074262). 3.30 Film: The Bridge at Remagen (515077). 5.20 Cartoon (S) (108204). 5.35 Helton (400120). 11.45 Film: Night Moves (430378). 1.40am Babyton (5827798). 2.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (6942023). 3.45am Film: White Cargo (430378). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
THE TEE-VEE
 As London except 12.25pm News (S) (950007). 1.00 The Powers That Be (S) (914755). 2.00 Cartoon (2394991). 3.05 Film: Dr No (2381713). 5.05 RoboCop (7540649). 11.45 Film: Harlow Street (430378). 1.40am Film: Dushman (7951446). 4.30-5.30am Jobfinder (88040).
SCOTLAND
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (99101). 2.00 Good News (1587). 2.30 Film: Return of the Jedi (5352292). 4.55 The Making of Outback (9617397). 5.20 Cartoon (S) (99999). 5.40 Our House (232000). 1.45 Film: The Heroes (886842). 4.30am Jobfinder (875002). 5.20-5.30am Film: Job (753798).
IRV
 As London except 12.25pm News: Dogs with Dunder (3905007). Wales: When You Were Here... (3905007). 2.00 News: Gwynedd (1587). Wales: The 2000 Years (430378). 3.30 Film: West Wall (65533). 2.35 Film: Soccer Sunday (780129). 3.30 Sport Classics (194). 4.00 News: The Celtic Muffin (7616533). 4.40 Film: Pictures from the Edge (2189194). 4.40 Wales: Pwllheli in Llangollen (5897463). 11.45 Film: Night Moves (430378). 1.40am Film: Babyton (5827798). 2.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (219595). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
MANCHESTER
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (964796). 2.00 The Per (593733). 2.25 The Match (3117943). 3.25 Cartoon (8912763). 3.40 The Making of Outback (9617397). 5.20 Film: Dr No (2381713). 11.45 Film: Night Moves (430378). 1.40am Film: Babyton (5827798). 2.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (219595). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
WEST YORKSHIRE
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (99101). 2.00 Film: The Per (593733). 2.25 The Match (3117943). 3.25 Cartoon (8912763). 3.40 The Making of Outback (9617397). 5.20 Film: Dr No (2381713). 11.45 Film: Night Moves (430378). 1.40am Film: Babyton (5827798). 2.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (219595). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
SC
 As C4 except 7.20am News (S) (494113). 10.15 Film: The Per (593733). 10.45 Film: The Match (3117943). 1.15 Cartoon: Edge (840151). 2.15 Film: Tiger (146945). 3.15 The Legend of the Hawaiian Slammers (S) (812216). 4.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (219595). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
WILTSHIRE
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (99101). 2.00 Film: The Per (593733). 2.25 The Match (3117943). 3.25 Cartoon (8912763). 3.40 The Making of Outback (9617397). 5.20 Film: Dr No (2381713). 11.45 Film: Night Moves (430378). 1.40am Film: Babyton (5827798). 2.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (219595). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
WILTSHIRE
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (99101). 2.00 Film: The Per (593733). 2.25 The Match (3117943). 3.25 Cartoon (8912763). 3.40 The Making of Outback (9617397). 5.20 Film: Dr No (2381713). 11.45 Film: Night Moves (430378). 1.40am Film: Babyton (5827798). 2.00am Shift (7012224). 3.20am Couch (219595). 5.00-5.30am News Business (15514).
WILTSHIRE
 As London except 12.30pm News (S) (99101). 2.0



The big picture

The Crying Game
Sun 10pm C4

A story about the relationship between a former IRA terrorist (Stephen Rea) and a hairdresser who is not all she seems (an extraordinary performance from Jaye Davidson) does not, on the face of it, look like a sure-fire box-office smash. But against all odds that is what *The Crying Game*, Neil Jordan's imaginative love story, became. The director shoots with a rare sense of panache, and the plot has more twists than the Monaco Grand Prix. Quite rightly, he picked up the Best Original Screenplay Oscar for it.

Television preview

RECOMMENDED VIEWING THIS WEEKEND
by Gerard Gilbert

How do you turn a savage 18th-century satire (so ferocious it alienated the not-so-squeamish Dr Johnson) into a family entertainment with guaranteed sales to the very squeamish 20th-century TV networks of America?

It helps that *Gulliver's Travels* (Sun C4) has already mutated over the centuries into a children's story, thanks to that classic image of the man tied down by the denizens of Lilliput. Add to that a starry cast (led by Danson as Gulliver, Mary Steeburgen, James and Edward Fox, Sir John Gielgud, Robert Hardy and Peter O'Toole, just for starters), and lavish special effects, and you have a production that stands a good chance of recouping its \$13m outlay. It's already been a big hit in the States. The good news is that compromise is minimal, but not the entertainment.

The other big drama of the weekend, *Over Here* (Sun BBC1), presumably also has one eye on the American market, although in this case the result is neither over here nor over there. In fact, it's the most awful twaddle from John Sullivan (*Only Fools and Horses*), who really should know better—an overblown

wartime drama about an RAF Spitfire squadron reluctantly sharing their airbase with a bunch of raw US Air Force recruits. Martin Clunes, as a pipe-smoking, neck-twisting British Group Captain, obviously thought this was an out-and-out sitcom (it isn't), while the whole thing is so ersatz and cliché-ridden it's hard to give a damn whether the planes return from Germany or not. Not their finest hour.

Clichés, clichés, clichés. Thriller writers have to be more aware of them than most, and Hossein Amini's *Deep Secrets* (Sat BBC1) isn't immune to the better class of cliché; in fact, you could argue that his entire plot (a policeman goes undercover to turn mobster's wife into a prosecution witness, falling in love with her in the process) is one whopper of a cliché. Amini tells a good story, though, assisted by a choice cast—including Colin Salmon, and Guy Pearce Minceur as a hit man to make *Pulp Fiction*'s Samuel L. Jackson look like a caring, sharing kind of bloke. But the women have the best roles here, and we get the actresses to fill them: Ann Mitchell (*Dolly Parton in Widows*), the ageing-well Amanda Donohoe, as the *femme fatale* of the

piece, and a lively new presence (to me, at least) in Sophie Okonedo.

Bookmark (Sat/Sun BBC2) continues its vintage season with Sean O'Meara's two-part biography of Samuel Beckett, reclaiming the great Irish writer from those chilly black-and-white Jane Brown photographs that showed him as part eagle, part ascetic saint. This is Beckett the boy—a good athlete, a loving son—a young man in Paris, London and Dublin; Beckett in love, Beckett winning the *croix de guerre* for unnamed acts of bravery in the French Resistance. And, lest we forget, Beckett the writer.

No names are named (apart from Charlie Sheen) in *Ruby Wax Meets*. Heidi Fleiss (Sun BBC1), the convicted Hollywood madame—but it does show up Ruby at her best and worst. At her best, she's a bulldozing celebrity interviewer who pummels her subjects into candour. At worst, she's cruel, gleefully reminding Fleiss several times that she's about to go to prison and about the sort of reception she's likely to meet there. But then maybe Wax just isn't doing her job if she can't offend some of us some of the time.



The big race

Oxford v Cambridge
Sat 3.30pm BBC1

What is it about a race between two university boat crews over a twisting four-and-a-quarter-mile stretch of the Thames that has so captured the public imagination over the past 142 years? By the next day, no one can ever remember who won it, but while it is happening the Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge universities ignites unwonted passions. Those who perhaps struggled with GCSEs suddenly take on a fervent allegiance to one or other of the ancient seats of learning. Tradition is a funny thing.

Saturday television and radio

BBC1

- 7.25 News; Weather (1776099).
- 7.30 Children's BBC: *Isognog*. 7.45 Willy Fog. 8.10 The Raccoons. 8.35 Addams Family. 9.00 Live and Kicking.
- 12.12 Weather (6114273).
- 12.15 Grandstand. Introduced by Steve Rider. 12.20 Football Focus. 1.00 News. 1.05 Canoeing. Britain's Olympic qualifying competition in the canoe slalom, held on the River Tay. 1.25 Racing from Haydock. 1.40 BNFL Score. 2.40 Boats Conditions Stakes. 1.40 Boat Race Preview. 1.55 Racing from Haydock. 2.00 BNFL Medlock Links Handicap Stakes. 2.10 Women's Boat Race: last Sunday's race at Henley. 2.20 Boat Race Toss. 2.25 Racing from Haydock. 2.30 BNFL 25th Anniversary Field Marshal Stakes. 2.40 Boats Boat Race: Live coverage. 4.10 Motorcycling: Action from the first two rounds of the Motor Cycle News British Superbike Championship from Donington Park. 4.30 Motor Sport: A look ahead to this season's RAC Auto Trader British Touring Car Championship. 4.40 Final Score (S) (47048032).
- 5.15 News; Weather (1216099).
- 5.25 Regional News and Weather (1155273).
- 5.30 Tom and Jerry (395625).
- 5.45 Children in Need Reports Back (668254).
- 5.55 Big Break (S) (856322).
- 6.25 The New Adventures of Superman. A woman claims she gave birth to Superman's baby (S) (299490).
- 7.15 Confessions. On dear... they're recommended this. Oh well... Coronation Street actor Peter Baldwin pays a visit to the Simon Mayo-led entertainment show (S) (305070).
- 7.50 The National Lottery Live. Former Madness front man Suggs gets the balls spinning (S) (109167).
- 8.05 Bugs. Return of the aggressively jaunty hi-tech computer-generated cartoon. 8.10 The Big Bang. Jaye Griffiths and Jesse Brimall (S) (194612).
- 8.55 News and Sport; Weather (Followed by National Lottery Update) (958780).
- 9.15 Deep Secrets. See Preview (S) (9323693).
- 9.40 Match of the Day. Newcastle United v Queens Park Rangers is the main event (S) (2288099).
- 11.45 They Think It's All Over Comedy sports quiz from last Tuesday. Kriss Akabusi and John Gordon Sinclair were the guests (R) (S) (631934).
- 12.15 The Road to Golgotha (S) (416533).
- 12.30 *Rude Awakening* (Aaron Russo/David Greenwalt 1989 US). Eric Roberts and Cheech (Cheech and Chong) Marin play two hippies who have been living in a South American commune since the 1960s. Returning to yuppiefied Eighties New York, they get an inevitable and not very well developed comedy shock (539939).
- 2.05 Weather (590007). To 2.10am.
- Regions. Wales: 11.45pm Squash. 12.15 They Think It's All Over. 12.45 The Road to Golgotha. 1.00 Film: *Rude Awakening*. 2.35 Weather.

BBC2

- 7.35 *Christopher Strong* (Dorothy Arzner 1933 US). Aviator Katherine Hepburn—in an early role alternating riding breeches and silver lame—falls in love with married politician Colin Clive (3542457).
- 8.50 *Press for Time* (Robert Asher 1966 UK). Four Norman Wisdoms for the price of one, as our hero crops up in a quartet of quizes (1160821).
- 10.30 *The Early Bird* (Robert Asher 1965 UK). Norman Wisdom plays a milkman whose livelihood is under threat from a large conglomerate (94937728).
- 12.05 *Unfold Stories: The Search for Amelia Earhart*. Who vanished in July 1937 while attempting the first solo flight around the world by a woman (1890983).
- 12.55 *They Died with Their Boots On* (Raoul Walsh 1941 US). Rousing if not entirely true portrait of General George Custer, from his early days at West Point, through the Civil War and the famous Last Stand at Little Big Horn in 1876. Starring Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland and Arthur Kennedy (88829525).
- 3.10 *Dodge City* (Michael Curtiz 1939 US). Errol Flynn again, taming the West and Olivia de Havilland in the film which was apparently the main inspiration for Mel Brooks' *Blazing Saddles* (63532815).
- 4.55 *Argentinian Grand Prix*. Live coverage of the qualifying session for tomorrow's Argentinian Grand Prix in Buenos Aires (S) (3762235).
- 6.10 *TOTIP2 Easter Special* (S) (833032).
- 6.40 *What the Papers Say*. New series. Jay Rayner of the *Mail* on Sunday looks back at the events of the week as reported in the press (S) (821457).
- 6.55 *News and Sport; Weather* (R) (403051).
- 7.10 *Bookmark*. See Preview (S) (403051).
- 8.05 *The Miserables in Concert*. An ensemble of over 200 singers gather at the Royal Albert Hall to celebrate the 10th birthday of this long-running musical (R) (S) (28158438).
- 10.35 *Court TV*. Money and broken relationships as a married couple fights over the ownership of the multi-million dollar company which they ran jointly (925506).
- 11.20 *The Elephant Man* (David Lynch 1980 UK). Lynch's most mainstream movie to date, vividly evoking Victorian London and creating a moving story about John Merrick, who was born with a disfiguring disease, abandoned by his parents and exhibited as a freak until taken in by a compassionate London surgeon, John Hurl, Anthony Hopkins, Anne Bancroft, John Gielgud, Wendy Hiller and (memorably) Freddie Jones (Followed by *Weatherview*) (28045344).
- 1.25 *Later with Jools Holland*. Paul Weller performs with help from vocalists Caroleen Anderson and Jheffia. Plus, Supergroup, Scott Walker, Senegalese singer Baaba Maal, the Vulgar Boatmen and Joan Armatrading (S) (1947649). To 2.30am.

ITV/London

- 6.00 *GMTV*. 6.00 News; Weather. 6.10 Eat Your Words: children's quiz. 6.40 Barney and Friends: double episode. 7.45 Disney's Wild Easter. 8.55 Mighty Morphin Power Rangers (4959524).
- 9.25 *Telegenesis*. Behind the scenes on the new TV version of *Gulliver's Travels*. Plus Cobra and Falcon from *Clash of the Titans* (S) (8940322).
- 10.25 *Spaz* (R) (818612).
- 10.55 *It's Not Just Saturday With Grange Hill* star Martino Lazzarini music from Longlegs and the Gin Blossoms (S) (9387761).
- 11.30 *The Chart Show* (R) (S) (933261).
- 12.30 *Speakeasy*. TV problem page for young people. Catherine Zeta-Jones talks about her temper tantrums (R) (S) (59877).
- 1.00 *News; Weather* (1686032).
- 1.05 *Local News; Weather* (1686032).
- 1.10 *Movies, Games and Videos* (5240148).
- 1.45 *Cartoon Time* (S) (1682186).
- 1.50 *The Making of Broken Arrow*. Behind-the-scenes look for the new John Travolta/Christian Slater movie (4183457).
- 2.25 *The Magnificent Seven* (John Sturges 1960 US). Kurosawa's *The Seven Samurai* transposed to Wild West Mexico, and catching some good names early on in their careers, including Steve McQueen, Charles Bronson, Robert Vaughn and James Coburn (91031709).
- 4.45 *News; Sport; Weather* (8620506).
- 5.05 *London Tonight and Sport* (8457902).
- 5.25 *Batman*. That Penguin again (8444438).
- 5.45 *Catchphrase* (S) (748728).
- 6.15 *Banymore* (S) (790341).
- 7.15 *The Shane Ritchie Experience* (Including Lottery Result) (S) (415896).
- 8.05 *Stars in Their Eyes*. People impersonate Van Morrison, Gene Pitney and Dina Vieregin. The real Matthew Kelly, one assumes, is the host (S) (105728).
- 8.50 *News; National Lottery Update; Weather* (Followed by Local Weather) (960525).
- 9.05 *The Governor*. Janet McTeer's prison governor is reinstated in the Lynda La Plante drama series (S) (315524).
- 10.05 *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall 1990 US). Corporate mogul Richard Gere hires hooker-with-heart Julia Roberts to escort him while dining the press opposition and ends up falling in love with her in a generally amusing, only occasionally erotic comedy reworking of *Pygmalion* (S) (30762964).
- 12.15 *Pajama Party* With guests Tori Amos and comic Charlie Chuck (S) (388649).
- 1.45 *Funny Business*. With Les Evans (S) (2241200).
- 2.10 *Tropical Heat* (R) (S) (8026).
- 2.30 *El News*. Reunited by a deadly killer (46594).
- 3.50 *God's Gift* (R) (2243043).
- 4.40 *TV Sports Classics II* (47888007).
- 5.05 *Coach* (S) (2130484).
- 5.30 *News* (49007). To 6.00am.

Channel 4

- 6.10 *Sesame Street* (R) (6690457).
- 7.05 *Little Dracula* (R) (6761490).
- 7.30 *Super Mario Brothers* (R) (75902).
- 8.00 *Trans World Sport* (69525).
- 8.10 *The Morning Line*. The day's nags (S) (61896).
- 10.00 *The Greatest*. Mary Rand and Ian Botham are given their ranking (R) (S) (15032).
- 10.30 *NBA 24/7*. Basketball (R) (38896).
- 11.00 *Gazetta Football Italia* (S) (1322).
- 12.00 *Sign On* (S) (29148).
- 12.30 *The Great Maratha* (3013780).
- 12.55 *The Student Prince* (Richard Thorpe 1954 US). MGM musical version of Sigmund Romberg's opera starring Edmund Purdom (whose songs are sung by Mario Lanza) as a Puritan prince who falls for barnyard Ann Blyth (96220815).
- 2.55 *Channel 4 Racing from Kempton Park*. Derek Thompson introduces the 3.15 Mares Stakes, the 3.45 Queens' Prize (H'cap), the 4.15 Easter Stakes, and the 4.45 Middlesex H'cap Stakes (S) (920438).
- 5.05 *Brookside Omnibus* (R) (S) (3837235).
- 6.30 *News Summary; Weather* (342525).
- 6.35 *All Creatures Great and Small* (Claude Whatham 1974 UK). Screen prequel to the novels of James Herriot, starring Simon Ward as the young vet, Lisa Harrow and Anthony Hopkins as Siegfried (69875322).
- 8.15 *Acas High Jack* (Jack Gold 1976 UK). RC Sheriff's World War One play *Journey's End* transposed from the trenches to the air—and to spectacular effect. Malcolm McDowell is the commander of a Royal Flying Corps squadron in France in 1917 who is being torn apart by the stress of command. Christopher Plummer, Peter Firth, Simon Ward, John Gielgud, Ray Milland, and Richard Johnson support (4523235).
- 10.20 *Drop the Dead Donkey*. From the first series of (R) (S) (604341).
- 10.55 *Blue Light Zone: The Witch Hunters*. From the Northern Transval, where over 98 per cent of the population still believe in witchcraft. The presence of related violent crimes is so great that a special Witchcraft Unit has been set up by the South African Police Force (S) (935032).
- 11.25 *Hit Street Blues*. A brutal rapist is at large in this episode from the ground-breaking Steven Bochco Boston-based cop show (R) (733612).
- 12.25 *The Mortuary Man*. The work of the Chief Mortuary Officer at Edinburgh's City Mortuary. I shouldn't order that take-away just yet (1886939).
- 12.55 *The Parrot May Have the Answer*. The bizarre murder of Jane Gill in which the only eye witness was her pet parrot (R) (S) (505021).
- 1.25 *White Jazz*. Dramatised documentary on American crime writer James Ellroy (R) (S) (8485552).
- 2.25 *The Late Edwina Black* (Maurice Elvey 1951 UK). Victorian whodunnit starring David Farrar and Geraldine Fitzgerald on lovers suspected of poisoning Farrar's wife (5030571). To 3.45am.

ITV/Regions

- ANGLIA**
As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (59877). 1.10 Anglia Sport Special (6784815). 2.55 *Quest*. DSV (8645728). 3.50 RobotCop (8307546). 5.20 *Barrow* (1431728). 12.15am Live from the Lydrome (5638755). 1.10am *Pajama Party* (6390991). 2.35am *Funny Business* (4892804). 3.00am *American Gladiators* (5354804). 3.45am *Film: The Golden Decade* (6105026). 5.00-5.30am *Wanted Dead or Alive* (54066).
- THE YESS/ROBINSON**
As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (59877). 1.10 *Shurtmashes* (3711544). 2.00 *Cartoon Time* (7393506). 2.05 *Film: Jane and the Lost City* (575273). 3.45 *Airwolf* (2650701). 5.20 *Batman* (1431728). 12.15am *Film: The Lookalike* (506910). 1.50am *Funny Business* (2239455). 2.20am *Pajama Party* (5024910). 3.45am *The War of the Worlds* (2136194). 4.35-5.30am *Cue the Music* (8189842).
- CENTRAL**
As London except 12.30pm *Heartland* (59877). 1.40 *The Marmalade Men* (68577341). 2.05 *Film: Duck's East of Eden* (5498235). 2.30 *RobotCop* (8307546). 3.20 *Airwolf* (7054544). 4.15 *The Mids*. Touch (743273). 5.20 *Barrow* (1431728). 4.00am *RobotCop* (8307546). 5.20-5.30am *Cue the Music* (8189842).
- ITV**
As London except 12.30pm *Heartland*. The Marmalade Men (59877). 1.10 *Wales: Onstage Backstage* (59877). 1.10 *West: House* (5240148). *Wales: Roadrunner* (79467709). 1.40 *Wales: Cartoon Time* (51674167). 1.50 *Wales and High Wales: The Making of Outland Island* (4452506). 2.15 *Movies, Games and Videos* (217273). 2.40 *RobotCop* (8307546). 3.45 *Airwolf* (2650701). 5.20 *Batman* (1431728). 12.15am Live from the Lydrome (5638755). 1.10am *Pajama Party* (6390991). 2.35am *Funny Business* (4892804). 3.00am *American Gladiators* (5354804). 3.45am *Film: The Golden Decade* (6105026). 5.00-5.30am *Wanted Dead or Alive* (54066).
- MERIDIAN**
As London except 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (59877). 1.10 *Wales: Onstage Backstage* (59877). 1.10 *West: House* (5240148). 1.55 *Father Dowling Mysteries* (8919061). 2.55 *Airwolf* (8645728). 3.50 *RobotCop* (8307546). 5.20 *Batman* (1431728). 12.15am Live from the Lydrome (5638755). 1.10am *Pajama Party* (6390991). 2.35am *Funny Business* (4892804). 3.00am *American Gladiators* (5354804). 3.45am *Film: The Golden Decade* (6105026). 5.00-5.30am *Wanted Dead or Alive* (54066).
- SC**
As 04.00 except 11.00am *The Avengers* (51322). 12.30 *Cartoon Time* (3013780). 6.30 *Hollyhead* (59877). 7.00 *Newyddion* (412883). 7.15 *Helen Yn Y Gwlad* (794167). 8.15 *Hal Street* (780603). 8.45 *Dyn Ddu*. Cofia Langtry (136534). 9.15-10.55pm *Film: The Descent* (9303934).
- beat World (5942877). 6.00 *Davis Cup Tennis* (4824032). 9.00 *US PGA Golf* (8916196). 12.00 *World Sport Special* (2841520). 12.30 *1.00am World of Speed and Beauty* (7953129).**
- UNITE**
6.30am *Home Shopping*. 7.00 *Fate and Fortune*. 7.30 *The Why Files?*. 8.00 *A25*. 9.00 *Mind and Body*. 9.30 *Wright to Go*. 10.00 *The Fashion Show*. 10.30 *Spanish Archer*. 11.00 *Showbiz*. 12.00 *Canary Wharf Omnibus*. 1.30 *The Fashion Show*. 2.00 *Wiz*. 3.00 *Sport*. 5.00 *Wright to Go*. 6.00 *The Fashion Show*. 6.30 *Spanish Archer*. 7.00 *A25*. 8.00 *Showbiz*. 9.00 *Fate and Fortune*. 9.30 *The Why Files?*. 10.00 *Wright to Go*. 10.30 *The Fashion Show*. 11.00 *Troops Darts*. 11.04 *Spanish Archer*. 11.30 *Spanish Archer*. 12.00 *The Sex Show*. 12.30 *Wright to Go*. 1.00 *Home Shopping*. 1.30 *Spanish Archer*. 2.00 *Fish Tank*. 3.00 *Showbiz*. 4.00 *Fate and Fortune*. 4.30 *The Why Files?*. 5.00 *Video Box*. 5.30-6.00am *The Fashion Show*.

Radio

- Radio 1**
(91.9-99.9MHz FM)
7.00am Kevin Greening. 10.00 Dave Pearce. 12.30 Danny Baker. 2.30 to 3.00 John Peel. 7.00 Lovegrove Dance Party with Danny Rampling. 9.00 Radio 1 Rap Show. 12.00 Essential Mix. Alan Moraes. 2.00 Annie Nightingale's Chill Out Zone. 4.00-7.00am Charlie Jordan.
- Radio 2**
(88-92MHz FM)
6.00am Mo Dutta. 8.05 Brian Matthew. 10.00 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *The News*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1.30 *Country*. 1.50 *Country*. 2.00 *Country*. 2.30 *Country*. 3.00 *Country*. 3.30 *Country*. 4.00 *Country*. 4.30 *Country*. 5.00 *Country*. 5.30 *Country*. 6.00 *Country*. 6.30 *Country*. 7.00 *Country*. 7.30 *Country*. 8.00 *Country*. 8.30 *Country*. 9.00 *Country*. 9.30 *Country*. 10.00 *Country*. 10.30 *Country*. 11.00 *Country*. 11.30 *Country*. 12.00 *Country*. 12.30 *Country*. 1.00 *Country*. 1

Russians turn draft-dodging into a fine art

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

Back in Soviet times, Boris P was a master of evading military service. He never slit his wrists or feigned mental illness like his friends. His trick was beautiful in its simplicity.

"When the call-up papers arrived, I would leave town for a while," he said. "Eventually I would return and go to the recruiting office, because not to do so was illegal. But I always made sure I was a bit late. This gave time for the eager idiots to get in before me. The officers would fill up their quota and tell me to come back next season. I played this game for nine years until I got too old for the army."

It is a game the youths of Russia can no longer play, for the country has run out of

eager idiots. With the war still raging in Chechnya, despite President Boris Yeltsin's peace initiative, few families want their sons to serve the Motherland.

The army is desperate for conscripts and has tightened the criteria over exemption from military service. The new policy goes against the goal Mr Yeltsin once had of moving towards a professional army and it defies the Council of Europe, which expects its members, now including Russia, to offer conscientious objectors alternative forms of service to society.

Thousands of middle-ranking officers are deeply unhappy about the state of the army. It is not crude nationalism many of them want but more democracy. Thanks to one disgruntled colonel, the *Independent* gained rare access to a recruiting centre. Normally such a visit would be arranged through the Ministry of Defence, but he let me in to observe the spring draft.

"For God's sake don't quote me," he kept saying, as he questioned the point of Russia starting the war in Chechnya and complained about the lack of reform in the forces. "I'll be in trouble if you name me," he said again, as he lamented the shortage of funds to pay and house officers and admitted the military could not give cast-iron guarantees that conscripts would not die of starvation or bullying in their two years of service. (Such cases are periodically reported in the Russian press).

So I will call him Colonel Y and say only that the red-brick recruiting centre was situated in southern Moscow.

Down both sides of a long, gloomy corridor on the ground floor, young men were waiting for medical examinations, some sitting with their legs defiantly flung out, others with their heads in their hands in a state of despondency. A few cringed with embarrassment because their mothers had insisted on accompanying them.

"My Andrei's in there," wailed a woman called Galina, pointing at a doctor's door. "It's outrageous. He fell and hit his head. He's got a letter from the hospital but the army still drags him down here. He'll be a bag of nerves after this."

Other youths looked on pityingly. "Of course I don't want to serve. What do you think I am, a patriot?" whispered Denis, a 19-year-old shop worker with long golden locks. "But I'll accept what comes, however it turns out."

This is how the system works: When a youth reaches 17, his

name enters the register of the nation's men. All are either liable for service, unfit for service or have already served and gained particular skills. The list is kept so the country knows what human resources it has in case of war.

From the age of 18, the young man can expect to be called before a commission of officers, doctors and civilians who decide whether he will serve. Call-up papers go out every spring and autumn.

The commission will exempt the youth if he has a child under three years old or dependent elderly relatives. His service can be put off if he is in higher education. But if he does not take officer training at university and get into the reserve, he must still serve after he graduates and is liable up to the age of 27.

Young men may be exempted on medical grounds. This is where the contest of wits between the authorities and the younger generation begins.

"There are dozens of ways of making yourself medically unfit," says Boris P. "I know lads who have drunk cleaning fluid to give themselves stomach ulcers. The most popular way is to bribe a psychiatrist to certify you as mentally unstable. But that brings problems. If you get a white ticket [of exemption] on those grounds, you can't get a driving licence afterwards."

The army, faced with a 20-per-cent shortfall in the ranks, is cracking down on tricks. Doctors' decisions must be confirmed by other doctors. The range of genuine ailments taken into consideration has been drastically narrowed. Hernia and "dropsy of the testicles" are no longer sufficient.

Apart from Chechnya, young men fear being posted to the Far East. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* this week reported the death of Mikhail Kubarsky who died from hunger while serving in Khabarovsk. Also unpopular is a posting to the Stroibat, the battalion which builds roads. The television programme *Vremchko*, arguing that service amounts to slave labour, recently interviewed conscripts who worked as male prostitutes on the streets of Moscow to make money for cigarettes.

Colonel Y wants to see a professional army and would like the state Duma to pass a law on alternative service.

Next month, many of the youths in the corridor will be heading off in lorries. Whether they go to the Stroibat, the Far East or Chechnya, the army promises to make men of them.

Chechen rebels inflict setback on Moscow

Moscow — Russian forces were yesterday reported to have suffered heavy losses in a new battle in Chechnya, which highlighted the difficulty of ending the war before June's presidential election as Boris Yeltsin had hoped to do, writes Helen Womack.

Military sources said 30 federal soldiers were killed and 67 wounded in fierce overnight fighting with Muslim separatists in the village of Gaiskoye, 20 miles south of the capital Grozny. It was one of the heaviest death-tolls in a single battle this year.

Chechen guerrillas had shot down a Russian SU-25 fighter bomber over Gaiskoye on Thursday, Tass news agency said, using a US-made hand-held ground-to-air Stinger missile. The pilot ejected and survived.

Russian troops attacked the separatists and believed they had cleared the village by Thursday evening. But the rebels opened fire again in the night and a Russian unit was forced to make a humiliating and costly withdrawal.

Fighting was also reported yesterday around the south-eastern mountain town of Vedeno, a rebel stronghold. And the Russians were said to be again bombing the south-western village of Shazhali, despite the local prosecutor's inquiry into why the settlement was attacked earlier this week after elders signed a peace agreement with federal forces.

All this is disappointing news for President Yeltsin who last Sunday staked his political fu-

ture on a peace plan announced on national television. The Kremlin leader, however, pressed on with a meet-the-people tour in the south Russian city of Belgorod, a stronghold of his communist opponents. Back in Moscow, another of Mr Yeltsin's rivals, the extreme nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy officially registered himself for the election on 16 June.

The latest opinion poll showed the communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, still in the lead with a predicted 21 per cent of the vote although Mr Yeltsin was closing on him with 19 per cent. Another poll showed that for 62 per cent of Russian voters, ending the war in Chechnya was the top priority.

With this in mind, Mr Yeltsin on Sunday announced a unilateral halt to military operations and promised a partial troop withdrawal. He also appointed Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin as head of a new state commission charged with settling the conflict and offered to open talks with the Chechen separatist leader, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, through mediators.

Yesterday Mr Chernomyrdin was preparing to hold the first meeting of his commission.

There was no word from General Dudayev, whose fighters have poured scorn on Moscow's plan. But the head of Mr Yeltsin's working group on Chechnya, Emil Pain, was quoted in the Russian press yesterday as saying not all in General Dudayev's circle insisted on full independence and some might be ready to bargain.

Leading ranks: A Russian officer pulling faces in a parade in St Petersburg

Photograph: AP

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

EASTER SUNDAY & MONDAY 6PM

4

THE GABY ROSLIN SHOW Gabby chats with the... Starts Saturday April 13th

obituaries / gazette

Peter Baer

Peter Baer was an artist foremost; then a master printer who enabled other artists to make their best original lithographs; and latterly a teacher of all aspects of printmaking who inspired his students.

His background was from the intellectual German refugee influx in the late 1930s which has so enriched our culture. The Baer family arrived in London from Berlin in 1936, when Peter was 12 years old, and Hermann Baer soon established his well-known antique dealer's shop at 6 Davies Street, Mayfair. I remember it well as a schoolchild for its amazing collection of wrought iron, holy relics, a large bear (the mascot), medieval wooden caskets and a large wooden carving of Christ on the ass in the window. Though the family was Jewish it was a cosmopolitan European culture which gave Hermann Baer his high reputation as a dealer. Before that the family business had been a successful reproduction furniture.

As happened with so many émigrés at the outbreak of the Second World War, the Baers were interned for six months and Peter's naturalisation was postponed until 1948. By that time he was a student at the Central School of Arts and Crafts and was supporting himself by various means, the most singular being as a gas lamp-lighter in the Lisson Grove area where some side streets were still gas-lit. He became an excellent professional draughtsman and photographer as well as devoting himself to listening to Miles Davis records.

In the Sixties he frequently visited Birgit Skold's Print Workshop in Charlotte Street, where he made etchings. She introduced Baer to Stanley Jones in 1959 when he and Timothy Simon founded the Curwen

Studio at the Curwen Press in Plaistow, east London. Jones remembers: "During the crucial formative years of the Curwen Studio, he helped with its day-to-day running in a caring and competent way. He was very sympathetic in interpreting the work of fellow artists. He worked with a wide variety of artists such as Henry Moore, John Piper and Barbara Hepworth, as well as the less famous. In the beginning all the editions were hand-printed from stone and zinc plate. Later the studio moved to Midford Place,



Baer: no barriers with students

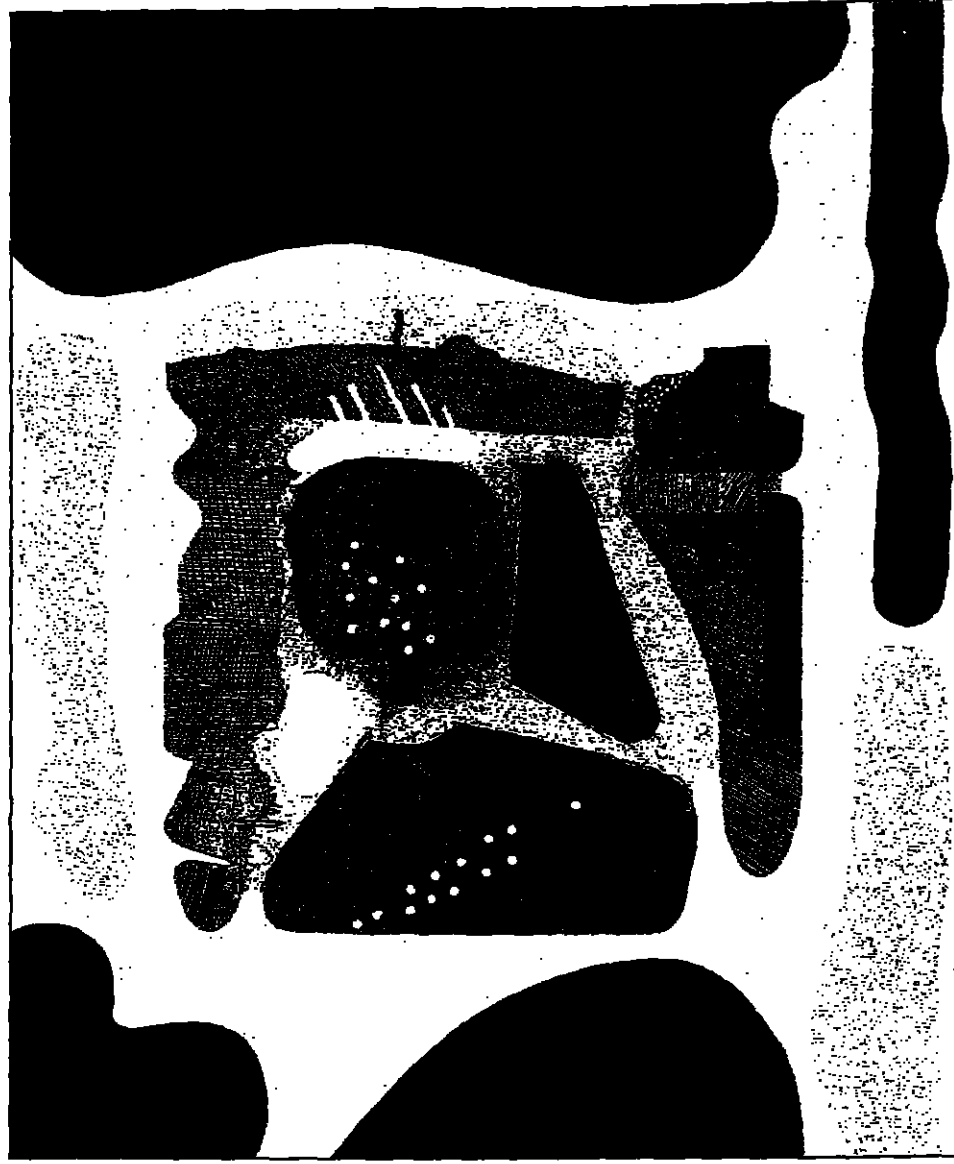
off Tottenham Court Road, where most of the editioning was done on a 1923 flat-bed lithographic press and Baer's role was happily confined to the most interesting part, that is working with artists and repeatedly proofing the image to realise the artist's intentions. Artists came from all over the world. Some were commissioned by Curwen Prints, some by international print publishers, and some were self-publishers or on fellowships. Many had no previous experience of lithography and needed initiation into what was called chemical printing when it was invented by Alois Senefelder 200 years ago. The technique re-

lies on the antipathy of grease and water, and has its own secrets and tricks. Baer was a master of this difficult medium.

In 1970 Baer started teaching printmaking at Hammer-smith School of Art, which was later absorbed into Chelsea College of Art and Design, where he continued to teach until his retirement in 1989. He taught Mark Balakjian who is in his turn now passing on his knowledge to students as well as being a director of Studio Prints, the well-known intaglio editioning studio in London. Balakjian remembers: "He taught without a barrier between himself and the students, taking part in their development as an equal without asserting his own views, always actively participating in resolving their technical problems, always ready to help whenever help was needed and whoever by. For him all students were equal and it was not surprising that often he was affectionately thought of as a friend. Peter's technical knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm were all inspiring."

In the Fifties Baer showed in the Beaux Arts Gallery in Mayfair, when he was associated with the "Kitchen Sink School" of artists who adopted a realistic style of depicting everyday domestic life. Other artists were John Bratby and Derrick Greaves. Baer's later work, however, changed to something more abstract and colourful. He showed in the Amalgam Gallery in 1986, Agi Katz's Boundary Gallery in 1988, and is represented in the Ben Uri Gallery Collection. After retirement he taught at the Camden Institute and was able to give more time to his own work.

In his painting, he was a colourist verging on expressionism. The recent exhibition of Emil Nolde at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, in



Baer: his later prints were abstract and colourful, like Summer Madness, 1980 (etching and silkscreen)

east London, drew him again and again. Baer had been reassessing his own north German roots and coming to terms with his own once-perceived Jewishness, and was on the brink of another burst of creativity.

His most productive printmaking was done soon after his second marriage to Iris Collins in 1968. Near his home in north

London, he absorbed and transformed the urban landscape into a series of inventive etchings, lithographs and mixed media prints which are, I think, his best work. He used texture derived from metal pressings, wire and other found detritus together with fluid shapes and embossing, describing the curve of a road, a cloud or an allot-

ment, which encapsulate so many residential settlements.

A memorial exhibition will be held at the Ben Uri Gallery.

Rosemary Simmons

Peter Baer, printmaker: born Berlin 28 March 1924; married secondly 1968 Iris Collins (one son); died London 22 March 1996.

Count Eigil Knuth

Because of its centuries under Denmark (from 1721 to 1979 it was a colony), Greenland has always engrossed Danish polar explorers. Eigil Knuth was a distinguished member of their company. He was the last Arctic explorer in the classic mould. Count Eigil Knuth was born in Klampenborg, near Copenhagen, in 1903. Having completed his schooling, he first studied building technology at the Academy of Arts in Copenhagen but, possessing artistic talent, then learnt woodcarving in Val Gardena in Italy between 1926 and 1928. Meanwhile, in 1927, he published his first book, *Kunst og Liv* ("Art and Life"), in which he set out his philosophy. He revealed an affinity with the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard, and hence appeared as an early Existentialist. More to the point, he saw art as a fight back to Nature.

Knuth first went to Greenland in 1932, on an archaeological dig run by the Danish National Museum to excavate old Norse sites on the west coast of Greenland. To the Danes, the medieval Norse colonisation of Greenland, from the 11th century until its mysterious disappearance in the 15th century, has meant a peculiarly close historical link with their Arctic dependency; in any case, Knuth had begun a lifelong love affair with Greenland.

He was following in the foot-

steps of his hero, Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian polar explorer who, in 1886, made the first crossing of the Greenland ice-cap, and opened modern polar exploration. In fact, Knuth's maternal grandfather, Augustin Gamel, a Danish businessman, financed Nansen's expedition.

In 1935, Knuth joined Augustin Courtauld's climbing expedition to east Greenland as archaeologist. Together with another Danish archaeologist, Knuth discovered and excavated an old Eskimo site in Irringser Fjord, and that gave him the direction of his life's work. Thenceforth, Eskimo life and culture preoccupied his thoughts. During the summer of 1936, Knuth crossed the Greenland ice-cap west to east with the French Trans-Greenland expedition under Paul-Emile Victor. Starting at Christianshaab, and ending at the Eskimo settlement of Angmagssalik, it was a trying journey of over 800km, but only a means to an end. It was the quickest way of reaching the destination.

Anthropology was the expedition's aim. Knuth set up a studio in Angmagssalik and there, in the ensuing winter, produced a series of busts of the local Eskimos. This was his main artistic production. Sensitive, lively, free of cloying romanticism, they captured the nature of the east Greenland Eskimos.

Thereafter, Knuth devoted

himself to archaeology, constantly returning to Greenland. During the Second World War, he was trapped in Denmark by the German occupation. This interrupted his great work.

In 1938, Knuth had begun leading a series of archaeological expeditions to north-east Greenland. He resumed in 1947, continuing on and off until 1973. The upshot was the discovery of two hitherto unknown prehistoric Eskimo cultures in the uninhabited environs of Independence Fjord and Danmarks Fjord. Dated to the last two millennia BC, they provided a key to the archaeology of Greenland, confirming that the country was populated by migration from North America.

Knuth made one foray outside Greenland, to Thailand, in 1961. He joined a Thai-Danish expedition to investigate the country's almost unknown prehistory. Otherwise, he remained devoted to the Arctic. He was an early exponent of the kind of archaeology that is fused with anthropology in order to use the present to offer clues to the past.

Lively and idiosyncratic, Knuth was an unfashionably invincible admirer of Robert E. Peary, the American explorer, vigorously rejecting all the doubts over whether he really did attain the North Pole in 1909. This caused some disagreement with the Danish Geographical Society, of which

he was a lifelong member.

Knuth was a link between the last generation of polar explorers who probed the last blank spaces on the globe, and the modern travellers left to invent new challenges and fill in the gaps. He saw the exploration and surveying of Greenland completed. He was an inspiration for the younger generation of Danish explorers in Greenland.

He published 12 books and various articles on aesthetics, archaeology and polar history. His feelings for Greenland were revealed in *Aron of Kangek* (1968), a book about the medieval Norse colonists and their enemies, the Skrælings, the ancestors of the modern Eskimos. Of Aron, a native Greenland Eskimo artist and writer of the last century who recorded his own story of Norsemen in Greenland, Knuth wrote: "Greenland publishes her counterpart to the sagas... concerning events during the Norse era - a living proof that the Skrælings remain the final victors in the struggle with the Norsemen."

Knuth ended one of his books: "The riddle of the Sphinx has been solved." Like many explorers, however, he remained a little Sphinx-like himself.

Roland Huntford

Eigil Knuth, archaeologist, sculptor and writer: born Klampenborg, Denmark 8 August 1903; died Copenhagen 12 March 1996.

Dario Bellezza

During the last few weeks, the Italian press ran stories about one of their favourite Roman celebrities, the poet, novelist and playwright Dario Bellezza. He was born into the genial chaos of post-war Italy, in a poor working-class family, and lived for the entire 51 years of his turbulent existence in the streets of Rome. In his early twenties, he started writing poetry and stories, a first collection of which, *Invenite e Licenziate* ("Curses and Carresses"), was published by Garzanti in 1971.

He was outspokenly and aggressively homosexual in his sexual orientation, both in his writing and in his daily life. His work naturally attracted the attention, and the admiration, of Pier Paolo Pasolini, who was to be one of the many literary figures supporting him. These included the great poet, also homosexual, Sandro Penna, the novelist Alberto Moravia and his wife Elsa Morante, about whom he wrote a fine love-hate poem, "Canzoniere per E.M."

His relationship with Penna was particularly close, and that old poet's poetic style, lucid and natural as breath, influenced his own. Bellezza's first novel, *Il Carnefice* ("The Executioner", 1973) was a revelation to Pasolini, who detected in it a violent conflict of emotions that resembled his own passionate urge towards condemnation and absolution. The two writers wrote in the forthright poetic prose of the lower classes and held up as heroes the working-class men and boys so brilliantly portrayed in the neo-realistic movies of the post-war era.

Pasolini's assassination in 1975 by a teenage tough on a dark stretch of beach at Ostia haunted and obsessed Bellezza for the rest of his life. In 1981, he published his first revolutionary work on his dead friend, *Morte di Pasolini*, and the second, *Turbamento* ("Disturbance") in 1984.

In 1981, I was writing a series of documentary poems about the murder of Pasolini for my collection *Ecce Homo: My Pasolini*, and after reading *Morte di Pasolini* I wrote to Bellezza, who sent me in a series of letters valuable information about his own experience of this brutal and controversial homosexual tragedy. In that first book, Bellezza attempts to relive the drama on his own autobiographical terms, invoking both chance and destiny in its elucidation as a "natural" death subconsciously always desired by his friend. He attacked the brutal sensational coverage of the death in the press, with its crude documentary reportages and pitiless photos of Pasolini's naked body.

These "autobiographical biographies" were essentially extensions of Pasolini's earlier novels, *Lettere da Sodoma* (1972) and *Angelo* (1979). He revealed to me the social significance of Pasolini's death: the fact that for Pasolini the contraceptive pill was liberating

Italian women and allowing them sexual freedom with the working-class men whom homosexuals had until then been able to call their own. Pasolini was no longer young, though his increasing fame as a film-maker and a writer made him an attractive target for both political and social enemies and sexual hangers-on.

The past was past, the present unlivable: he could not come to terms with it; death became the only solution, ever since the first intimations of old age had begun to torment him. He could no longer find those days of old, in a decade become empty and joyless, and Pasolini was now walking in a desert without mirages.

These books are indeed memorable eulogies for a great man.

But Bellezza was also well known as a poet, and in 1976 he obtained the prestigious Viareggio prize for *Morte segreta*. Bellezza paraphrased Oscar Wilde:

Love kills the thing it loves:

you - you do not know who said that you now far away whose memory assassins me now, makes me numb and sick of everything: self-slaughter whose will be the first, yours or mine?

These moving lines written for someone he had loved and lost, someone whose ignorance and indifference drove him to despair, come from the 1990 collection, *Libro di Poeta*. In 1994, he won the Montale prize for poetry.

In the last weeks of his life, he had provoked excited comment in the press and among his still-remaining, ever-dwindling circle of literary friends, by insisting that he be allowed to treat his AIDS by testing a bogus healing machine, "to stimulate the lymphocytes", wrongly claimed to halt the progress of the disease. After a hard fight, he won the right to test it... without result. Then his friends tried to obtain a state pension for Bellezza,



Bellezza: aggressively homosexual. Photograph: AP

who was living in abject poverty. He made some last appearances on TV chat shows. But it was too late. He did not live on long enough to receive the first instalment of his pension.

James Kirkup

Dario Bellezza, poet, novelist, playwright: born Rome 5 September 1944, died Rome 31 March 1996.

Margaret Read

Your sympathetic obituary of Margaret Read by Leonie Cohn [21 March] put me in mind of my first day as a young assistant at York Art Gallery in the austere days of January 1953, writes John Jacob.

I was introduced to the volatile Lady Read (as she had just become). "Welcome to York," she said. "You mustn't

think we're provincial. Constantine was crowned here." And then in the same breath, "You must be wondering why Herbert accepted the knighthood [announced that morning]? It would have been like giving up the sweet ration!" I have never since felt so much at the centre of the ancient and modern world.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

KING: Robert Brenzard, aged 57, at Royal Free Hospital, London NW3, on 2 April 1996, after devastating but mercifully brief illness. Adored husband of Gillian and father of Laura, Thomas, Allan and Sandy. Partner in Uliffes, Booth Bennett Solicitors. Funeral at Golders Green Crematorium, on Friday 12 April at 2pm. All friends and colleagues welcome there and afterwards at his home. Family flowers only, but donations to his memory to the Friends of the Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 6PN. Enquiries, telephone Leverton & Sons, Funeral Directors, 0171-387 6075.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephone 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. A daytime telephone number should be attached.

Changing of the Guard
TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Scots Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Scots Guards.

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr Franta Belsky, sculptor, 75; Sir Paul Beresford MP, 55; Mr Rodney Bickerstaffe, associate general secretary, UNISON, 51; Mr Roy Brenner, impressionist, 35; Mr John Brooke-Little, Clarendon King of Arms, 69; Mr Ivan Callan, High Commissioner to Brunei, 53; Miss Anne Campbell MP, 56; Miss Joan Carylle, soprano, 63; Mr Bernard Carter, painter and etcher, 70; Mr Anthony Chubb, former chairman, Fosco, 68; Mr Roger Cook, broadcaster and journalist, 53; Mr Paul Daniels, magician, 58; Admiral Sir Desmond Dreyer, 86; Mr Julian Faber, former chairman, Willis, Faber and Dumas, 79; Mr Willis Hall, writer, 67; Dr David Ingram, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Kent at Canterbury, 69; Sir John Knox, High Court judge, 71; Lord Moore of Wolvercote, former private secretary to the Queen, 75; The Rev Ian Paisley, MP and MEP, 70; Miss Felicity Palmer, mezzo-soprano, 52; Mr André Previn, composer and conductor, 67; Mr Dudley Sutton, actor, 63; Mr Dilip Vengsarkar, cricketer, 40; Professor James D. Watson, geneticist and Nobel prizewinner, 67; Sir Marcus Worsley BL, Lord-Leutenant of North Yorkshire, 71.

TOMORROW: Mr Dennis Amis, cricketer, 53; Miss Angela Bonallick, golfer, 59; Miss Fredda Brilliant, sculptor, 88; Mr Francis Ford Coppola, film director and screenwriter, 57; Sir Geoffrey Cox, former chief executive, ITN, 80; Mr Luca Cumani, race-horse trainer, 47; Professor Sir Graeme Davies, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Glasgow University, 39; Professor Donald Denman, land economist, 85; Mr Peter Fluck, puppet-maker and artist, 55; Sir David Frost, television presenter, 57; Mr Frederick Garner, former chairman, Pearl Assurance, 76; Mr James Garner, actor, 68; Sir Terence Harrison,

chief executive, Rolls-Royce, 63; Vice Admiral Sir Arthur Hezlet, former submarine commander, 82; Mr Gordon Kaye, actor, 55; Mr Martyn Lewis, broadcaster, 51; Mr Cliff Morgan, former head of Outside Broadcasting, BBC Television, 66; Mr Ian Richardson, actor, 62; Mr Andrew Sachs, actor, 66; Mr Ben Shanks, star player, 76; Group Captain Mary Shaw, former director and matron-in-chief, PMRAFNS, 63; Miss Alison Shrubsole, former principal, Homerston College, 71; Mr David J. Williams, chief constable, Surrey, 33; Sir Geoffrey Wylie, former chairman, the Race Relations Board, 86; Mr Mark Wolfson MP, 62.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, playwright and poet, 1671; Gustave Moreau, painter, 1826; René Lalique, jewellery designer, 1860; Harry Houdini (Erich Weiss), stage magician and escapee, 1874; John Beattie, poet, 1906; Deaths: Richard I (Coeur de Lion), King of England, killed in battle 1199; Albrecht Dürer, artist, 1528; Sir Francis Walsingham, statesman, 1590; Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky, composer, 1971. On this day: St Paul's Cathedral was badly damaged following an earthquake tremor in London, 1590; George Washington was elected as first US president, 1789; the first modern Olympic Games were inaugurated at Athens, 1896; on his seventh attempt, the American Robert Edwin Peary became the first man to reach the North Pole, 1909; Sir Anthony Eden becomes prime minister, 1955. Today is the Feast Day of St Celestine, Pope, St Euphrosius of Constantinople, St Marcellinus of Carthage, St Prudentius of Troyes and St William of Eskilhoe. TOMORROW: Births: St Francis Xavier, Jesuit missionary, 1506; William Wordsworth, poet, 1770;

Lectures

TODAY: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Cézanne: drawings and colour-constructions", 1pm; Robert Ledbridge, "Zola's Cézanne", 3.30pm.

TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "20th-century German Painting", 2.30pm.

Wills

Arnold Abramo, Lord Goodman, of London W1, solicitor, former Chairman of the Arts Council, and Master of University College, Oxford, 1976-86, left estate valued at £408,638 net.

Dying as part of a community of hope

The tonal quality of the word "death" derives from our past. When I think about death, I remember the widow who wrote to me that she was dying, but when I failed to visit before she was gone; I think of my own father-in-law, for whom the consolation in his final extreme enfeeblement was the thought that he would be reunited with his wife; I think of a friend who went through labour knowing that her baby had already died. These are the deaths which inform and colour my understanding of death, and they are in the past. They cluster my memory with a variety of powerful emotions, of regret, of sorrow, of guilt, and even of encouragement.

Holy Saturday prompts a willingness to think long and hard about the death of Jesus, and to change the way in which these past deaths affect me. The same, of course, might be true of the death of Socrates, or any other death to which I might give serious attention. But the sort of difference which it might make to think in this way about Jesus, rather than about anyone else, is a difference in understanding those connections between myself and others which death has brought about.

Death is a matter which touches me because of the impact which those past deaths have upon the web of interconnectedness which bound me to them. This web is made up of mutual relations, I both give to, and receive from, other people. My sense of the kind of person I am is bound into their lives, and their death inflicts irretrievable rupture, not just in our relationship, but upon my sense of my own continuity. Death, therefore, is what makes our search for person-constructing, identity-sustaining values so serious an

Arguments for Easter

The Right Rev Stephen Sykes, Bishop of Ely, concludes our series of meditations for Holy Week with a consideration of the meanings that death may have for a Christian.

enterprise. Since all our present relationships are going to suffer the damage that death can inflict, these values must be such as to understand the onslaught of the thought of death. If I show myself ready to allow the story of Jesus' death to influence the way in which I understand death, then in effect I am inviting him to have a hand in these relationships.

To see death as firmly set within the context of various forms of interconnectedness sets a question against that tradition which insists that we die alone. Of course it may be true that persons are physically or emotionally isolated when dying. It is also trivially true that people die one by one at particular times and places. But it seems a quite unnecessary case of giving death a bad name to insist that my death is something I must do on my own. We do not have to die in loneliness. The whole point of Christians saying that love is stronger than death is that one need not die alone in that sense.

Everything about dying should place us in the familiar context of those who have participated in the death of Christ. We are

surrounded here, if anywhere, by a great cloud of witnesses. This explains the familiar petition in ancient liturgies that we be protected from "sudden death". To die suddenly, of course, means to die without the benefit of the ministrations of a priest. But it also means, in *extrema*, to die without even having been able to make a mental act of recollection, the point of which was precisely to locate oneself in the fellowship of those who have lived and died in the faith of Christ.

It is the measure of the distance we have travelled from such simple pieties that we should regard sudden collapse in the midst of daily life as the best of all possible deaths. To desire such a death for ourselves is a sign of the degree to which we have come to accept an unrealistic forgetfulness of death.

The Christian need not die alone, but as a member of a community of hope, that statement does not entail any Promethean denial of the reality of death, or an inauthentic cheerfulness about the prospect of dying. But it makes a large difference to belong to a community of forgiveness, love and endeavour, which knows that nothing can separate it from the love of God. Death has lost the sting which chains us irredeemably to the past, in guilt or desperate attempts at forgetfulness.

When we celebrate the feast of that unconquered love tomorrow, we shall do so as a community. We shall remind ourselves of those moments of betrayal and rupture which preceded Jesus' death, and yet of the life of the world. And, because of this, we shall know that all those labours which build up our interconnectedness-in-love will not have been done in vain.

APRIL 20 1996

Anti-roads protesters may have lost a battle at Newbury. But they are well-equipped for a long war. Mary Braid reports

Eco-warriors undefeated

Steady Eddie, 28, a self-employed electrician, picks up the phone in the eco-warriors' media centre, an office on a Newbury industrial estate. "Depressed?" he says, raising his voice above the sound of CB radio and mobile phones. "Not a bit. People have just gone off to get their strength back and their heads together. Some went down to Winchester to watch the eclipse."

The last of 30 tree-top settlements - Tot Hill and Castle Camp - was cleared by bailiffs this week on the route for the Newbury bypass and their agile environmental guerrillas evicted or arrested. Despite the best efforts of the tree dwellers, an eight-mile scar now slits through forest and across meadow and hills a few miles outside Newbury.

The bulldozers and the hardhats appear to have won. They seem to have defeated the hard-core eco-warriors, born at Twyford Down in 1992 (the first direct action anti-road campaign) and veterans of the fight against the M11 London link campaign two years later - who have emerged at Newbury as gladiators of the wider environmental movement.

Now the bypass, which definitely has the support of the majority of residents in the fume-choked, traffic-jammed town, seems almost certain to be completed. The Government is putting construction out to tender. Never has a British road been abandoned at this late stage.

This week the Highways Agency was in a bullish mood. It played down the disruptive effect of the protest, portraying the eco-warriors as nuisances, busy devouring public funds rather than operating as the land's custodians. 10,000 trees had now been felled, said a spokesman, and the bypass was on schedule. Road protests are apparently now built into work schedules.

And the law has weighed in heavily on the side of the bulldozers. More than 700 protesters were arrested under the new Criminal Justice Act. Some were jailed or bailed to keep away from the site. When all else failed, the environmental champions turned to a rare tiny snail - Desmoulin's whorl - to stop the giant diggers. They failed to convince the High Court that the bypass should be delayed until the safety of the snail was assured.

But a bigger long-term issue faces the anti-roads campaigners this weekend than the loss of one battle at Newbury. There is an important question mark over whether the tactics they adopted are undermining their efforts to win over public opinion.

For the last three months it has been all-out war between the hardhats and the Third Battle of Newbury troops (so-called because of two previous civil war battles) led by the dreadlocked tree climbers, with names like Blackbird and Galahad, and their underground allies, who have tunneled beneath the bypass route to complement sabotage from the air.

As bailiffs and protesters fought it out in the trees, it was surprising that no one actually died. It eventually became a battle to see who could rise the earliest. The protesters got up at 4am to sabotage bulldozers: private security guards rose at 2am, in camouflage black, to destroy the tunnels being burrowed underground.

Leonie Austin, Highways Agency spokeswoman, says protesters' methods were "extremely dangerous" and reeled off a litany of offences including planting

spiked balls, spiking trees to damage chain-saws and the severing of vehicle break cables (these are claims protesters dismiss as exaggeration or invention).

Intimidation of Highways staff, she says, was widespread. "Most of our engineers had to go ex-directory." Since Twyford Down the protesters have become "cleverer and slicker and they were always violent." In a rural setting the agency has found guerrilla tactics harder to combat than in the cities.

There was a long period of democratic debate about this road and it's not our money being spent on security but yours," she says, no doubt most keen to reach those taxpayers who have popped pennies in the Newbury protest collection box. The bill for police and private security guards is expected to reach £4m.

And if public finance does not rattle your cage, how about those excrement and urine bombs? They hardly had the impact of a fatal concrete block dropped from a motorway bridge during the miners' strike, but they did create a little distaste for protesters' methods.

But not everyone believes that the tactics of the anti-roads campaign turned off

The Highways Agency is in bullish mood; 10,000 trees have been felled. Road protests are now built in to work schedules

the public. Danny Penman, who is writing a book about Newbury, believes that the protesters are still winning on public relations front. "Newbury was the first time it was in everyone's face," he says, pointing to the greater media coverage. "They have put the issue of road building on the national agenda."

At Newbury, New Age has joined middle-aged, middle class, middle England in a formidable display of opposition to the Government's road-building programme. Old biddies in woolly hats have stood side by side with nose-ringed youngsters. Perhaps the strongest sign of confidence in the Newbury protesters and their tactics was Friends of the Earth's decision to become the first mainstream environmental pressure group publicly to lend them support.

Mr Penman admits that urine did rain and excrement did fall, but rarely; pink paint and sticky mushroom soup were the protesters' favourites. The anti-roads brigade, skilful manipulators of the media, assumed that body waste would not go down well with the public but, in an essentially anarchist network, it is impossible to control everyone's actions.

Even Paul Everitt, director of the British Road Federation, supporters of the bypass, admits that the protesters have a strong built-in advantage. A man in a suit holding a press conference is never as sexy - to the public or those who provide their news - as the heroes who live in the trees. Hence Newbury has become the frustrated home news reporters war zone, with



Urine did rain and excrement fall, but rarely; pink paint and mushroom soup were the protesters' favourites

hacks queuing up to report from a treehouse on the front line. "I try to wear a colourful tie," says Mr Everitt, lamely.

He also tries to get the message over that the real "losers" are the people of Newbury. But "no reporter has spent a day with a local trying to drive around Newbury". He parodies: "Here I am sitting in the car with Mr A and we can't get out of the driveway...." And if the superior appeal of lat-

ter-day Tarzans were not enough, he wrestles daily with a hypocritical public, happy to give a donation to save nice trees but ultimately unwilling to part with their cars.

The protesters have an effect, he concludes, though not as directly as they might think. They do influence public opinion, which affects government decisions, such as the Treasury's £240m cut

to the road-building programme. Compared to that £4m in security costs is a drop in the ocean for a government keen not to lose face when confronted by civil disobedience.

Few on either side really believe that the protesters are about to pack up and retire to that second treehouse in Devon. Furthermore, Danny Penman predicts that Newbury may be the tree dwellers' zenith.

"They are not drop-outs but social revolutionaries with a desire to see widespread social change." After months of tree-top and tent discussions, he says tactics are about to change. "This type of protest has reached a cul-de-sac. The protesters will now move on to a wider battle against the motor car."

Whatever happens the foot soldiers remain loyal. Celia Murphy 27, an NHS supplies buyer from Birmingham, started road campaigning last year. She is now a fundraiser for the Third Battle and a frequent weekend visitor to Newbury. Asthma runs in her family and although she has only mild symptoms, her two sisters suffer chronic attacks. She supports Friends of Earth's proposal to cut traffic by 5 per cent by 2005 - radical when the Government is expecting the number of vehicles to double.

But Newbury is more than an anti-road campaign. The values and philosophies that guide the protest have caught Ms Murphy's imagination. Here live larger-than-life characters struggling to find a new way and creating, through the names of their camps and battles, a new community mythology. Such freedom occasionally

This type of protest has reached a cul-de-sac. The protesters will now move on to a wider battle against the car

throws up the surreal, like the self-styled King Arthur Pendragon, who headed up the Camelot camp and is firmly convinced, along with his Druid followers, that it is his destiny to save the land from environmental disaster.

"What amazed me when I visited was people's understanding of the issues and how highly educated they were," says Ms Murphy, who adds she has seen little or no aggression from protesters, who regularly discuss how to remain "fluffy" in the heat of battle. "I took my uncle down, who is a historian and he thought it was like the early days of Christianity; all these people sitting round and talking and arguing about so many issues."

She is not surprised that the attempts to stop the route being cut have failed. But neither does she think that the war over. She will continue to visit at weekends with the donations that show no sign of drying up.

"Sometimes it feels a little panicky here. They believe there will be environmental disaster. While they are working at break-neck speed most people are just getting in their cars and living ordinary lives. I think theirs is a saner reality."

For Steady Eddie and those manning the fort this weekend this is simply a welcome lull in hostilities. At Twyford Down the greatest disruption came after the site was cleared and construction began. "They have an 18-mile perimeter fence to patrol now and they will never keep us out," he laughs. "You can help or you can watch Neighbours."

Jo Brand's week

So Pepsi are painting the town blue and very tedious it is too. That animated Barbie doll, Claudia Schiffer, is raking in a fair bit, starring in an ad for the new improved Pepsi can. The story goes like this: adolescent boy has fantasy of being a bit of soap in Claudia's shower. Claudia approaches shower, boy's grinning face appears on soap as he prepares to fulfil his fantasy. Huge fat woman takes Claudia's place - boy screams in horror.

I'm sorry, have I recently missed an important evolutionary event? Can monkeys actually use typewriters now? Are they employed by Pepsi as writers? And how do you write "Ha! Ha! Ha!" sarcastically? The new Pepsi slogan is "Change the script." Yes, please.

As the gap between rich and poor widens, people are being forced to change their eating habits. You see the underclass with no choice but to grub around for the sort of food that the middle classes wouldn't be seen dead eating. Beef bourguignon, fillet steak and beef on croûtes. Poor buggers.

And poor little buggers, too. Children have always been the ones who suffer most through poverty and therefore it's cheering to know that charities like Save The Children are around to offer some sort of respite where basic needs are not met. It seems, though, that without even us, it seems, we are becoming one of those third-world countries with children living on the poverty line. Obviusly children here are nowhere near as deprived as their counterparts in the poorer parts of the world, but given the amount of money floating around in Britain, no kids should be going hungry. This is why several charities are getting together to form a more powerful entity to tackle poverty. Good to see them stepping into the political arena. Perhaps the Church might have a bash next.

It seems like everyone's hungry. Apparently vampire bats have started attacking peasants in El Salvador, because there's just not enough food elsewhere for them. Normally vampire bats prefer more digestible snacks, so they must be pretty desperate to put people on the menu. Maybe it's time for humans to put vampire bats on the menu. Given BSE and recent revelations that pigs have TB, they may be the



only option left. Remember not to serve with garlic.

I see Liz Hurley is to play Delilah in a biblical epic for an Italian-French mini series to be shown later in the year. Liz, who now has a quintuple barreled name: "Liz Girlfriend-Of-Hugh-Grant-Hurley" apparently looks wonderful in the biblical costumes according to one of those ubiquitous "spokesmen" who are required to come up with something/anything positive about stars in films. Strangely, he neglected to say anything about her acting ability.

Of course, Delilah was the woman who cut off her geezer Samson's hair, thus destroying his strength, resulting in his capture by the Philistines, but finally leading him to break up the temple col-

umn by crumbling column; Liz may well play this from the heart, not being a stranger to someone whose own column crumbled on inspection by a member of the LAPD.

If you live in London or the South-east, best not become a telephone worker. Our voices, it seems, are not very attractive to the earholes at the other end of the line. Some research carried out recently by a professor of psychology showed that when testing the reaction to various regional accents on the basis of trustworthiness, competence and sociability, Scottish accents scored very high on all counts. There seems to be no mention of how polite people actually are on the phone, and this means quite a lot to me. An operator I once spoke to who had a very nice reassuring voice told me I had a very nice voice too, and asked if he could phone me sometimes. I was gobsmacked and hung up. It was the one time I wished video phones existed - he'd never have started in the first place.

Advertising watchdogs recently condemned a poster for vodka using a drag artist, because they said it could encourage drinkers to become transvestites. You what? Oh yes, I can really see that happening. A few sips and suddenly you want to throw on the missus's twin set and swan off to your local bar. If we're talking the effect of advertisements on changing you into something you're not, perhaps we need to examine ads for

some women's products. For example, are the Wonderbra ads going to turn women into simpering idiots? Are the Peugeot ads going to make women leave their homes and rush over the Atlantic to drive across America? Or will wearing Boots make-up inevitably lead to hordes of out-of-control women lobbing cucumber at men's faces, snogging under tables or throwing plates? I think not. Don't be so silly.



Advertising of epic proportions

The new male contraceptive is as effective as the pill, we're told. It's been tested on 400 men and it's ready to go. Apparently, it works by lowering the sperm count which, I have to point out, Mother Nature seems to be managing fairly well on her own already. I'm not so sure I could be very confident about men and contraception. Some men will say anything to get women in the sack.

Can we women be confident they've got nothing in their sac? At present, the male contraceptive is administered in rather unpleasant injection form in the buttock, so that's going to put off men with a low pain threshold. (About 98 per cent of them then.) Still, if it ever comes on to the market, it will make a nice change to see the poor dears piling on the weight and being depressed.

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You must speak up if you want the goalposts shifted

The worms are turning. From the Law Society to the Test and County Cricket Board, insiders are running scared. Out there, at the grass roots, outsiders are banging on the doors. A vacancy on the selection committee for England's cricket team has called forth nine candidates, among them Ian Botham; there is no precedent for the election that now has to take place. This weekend, solicitors are consulting barristers about the legality of moves to oust the entire council of the Law Society. It turns out legal revolution is a lot easier to engineer than anyone thought. Will Carling's immortal phrase rings in the air. The old farts are again under assault. Defence is on the run.

Well, at least there are welcome signs of renewal in organisations which could do with a spring clean. We should not get carried away. Revolts against the Establishment are not new. Each generation of youth struts its stuff and age quails. We have heard about the end of deference before. One of the attractive features of Thatcherism was its impatience with old guards and status quos. Then Lady T turned out to be highly selective in where she swung her handbag.

The country's biggest symbol of deference to the wisdom of the ages (and the acres), the House of Lords, remains entirely unreformed. The Barings crisis showed that even in the City of London, supposedly subject to all sorts of competitive cleansing forces, the powers that were remained the powers that be. Deference ends only when those outside the gate start doing something to evict the possessing classes.

It is people's growing consciousness of them-

selves as consumers that has promoted the decline of deference. The Citizen's Charter helped, focusing attention on rights and the performance of institutions in meeting them. In politics, anti-deference mostly takes the form of across-the-board rejection of politicians. Measures of public esteem place Members of Parliament low, low down. But you can only throw the old farts out if there is a replacement team. A less deferential political culture would surely by now have given birth to more credible alternatives than the Greens, the Social Democrats and Sir James Goldsmith.

In the voluntary and professional sectors and sport, deference has certainly taken a knock. In charities, from the National Trust to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, trustees and executives now have to worry about members' reaction and revolt. Often, though, members are only stirred by single issues such as fox hunting, for example. Their enthusiasm fires like a comet, then quickly wanes. Insurgents wanting permanent change must sooner or later take over running of the committee.

Of course, the grass roots are not necessarily progressive. The current president of the Law Society, Martin Mears, was elected last summer as the voice of "country" solicitors against the machine candidates. Mr Mears has been nothing if not controversial but, it seems, has failed to satisfy the country cousins that he is doing enough quickly enough to gouge yet more money out of the public on conveyancing fees. A special general meeting is in prospect that could, after postal ballots of members, lead to the unsettling of



Mr Mears and the entire Law Society council. That outcome would not only offer a welcome demonstration of democracy at work. It would make the Law Society more honest and allow us all to see where conflicts of interest (between public and professionals, say) actually lie. Not all governing committees are stuffy. Age can bring wisdom; experience can inform decisions for the better. But what does matter is the relationship between the insiders and the outsiders, consultation and, preferably, regular elections.

Traditionally, sport has been autocratic or, at best, oligarchic. British football used to be a byword for deference, all those supporters crowded on wet terraces. Fans are now better treated – and pay more for it – but the operation of most clubs is far from populist. For all the rise of fan culture in recent years, football is still run by cliques whose connections with the unwashed masses of everyday supporters is limited: supporters are rarely invited to vote or participate in decision-making.

Sports government seems beset by what we might call the FIFA factor – the prevalence of self-regarding gerontocracy in the upper reaches of the administration. Old boys go on forever. Will Carling's challenge provoked the fans in rugby, but only briefly. To effect change, fans have to be prepared to vote, vote and vote again.

Underdogs in voluntary organisations and professional groups usually have three options. They are exit, voice and loyalty. Most people are loyal; they defer. They may grumble – members may say things behind their hands – but loyalty to the regime ensures nothing changes. Exit is

drastic. Fans stop going to games; members stop paying subscriptions. The organisation folds. Voice is the democratic option. Fans start speaking up. They appoint spokespeople who tweak the greybeards. Sports pages, like ours this week, rescound with debate about prices and conditions. Members start calling special meetings, circulating round-robins and making a useful nuisance. Good so far, but they then have to be prepared to take the committee jobs, and run risk of becoming old farts in their turn.

You can argue the England selection question in different ways. Ian Botham may possess a large character and an admirable track record on the field, but it is anyone's guess whether as a selector he will make, as they say in Yorkshire, a tor he will make. Cricketers' talent cannot be conjured out of nowhere, however imaginative the selectors of the TCCB might be.

Yet the contest for the committee has the merit of exposing cricket governance as a network of gent and amateurs. They may be the game's strength, embodiments of its values and better self. But there is no substitute for an election in exposing the argument. Not that the TCCB electorate is a great sample of English cricket – it consists of the mini-establishments in the counties and the MCC. Nonetheless, here the politics of cricket is going to be put on public display. Power is made more visible, contestable. You do not have to be John Stuart Mill – a first-class batsman with a beard to match WG Grace's – to believe that more contested elections must be a useful education in a society that holds representative government dear.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Back to the 18th century with Howard's draconian penal code

Sir: If the Home Secretary believes that stiffer mandatory sentences for repeat offenders will have more than a negligible effect on the levels of serious crime he may be disappointed (report, 4 April). The "Bloody Code" of the 18th century – a haphazard collection of private members' Bills reflecting the conservative and unenlightened views on crime and punishment of the complacent landed gentry and the acquisitive *nouveau riches* of the time – failed to reduce the amount of crime and disorder despite sanctioning the death sentence for over 200 crimes.

The desperate or disturbed were not discouraged by the noose so a longer prison sentence is unlikely to have such an effect. Rather it was juries who

were in awe of the savage sanctions and were disinclined to convict, fearing the sentence would be disproportionate. However, with the National Lottery, unbribed greed amongst public figures and a widely derided and not fully accountable government, the Britain of the 1990s disturbingly resembles that of the 18th century.

MARK TRAYNOR
Grantham, Lincolnshire

Sir: Michael Howard ("The key to our protection", 4 April) now tells us that, under his new proposals, ministers would "have no part to play" in deciding whether to release mandatory lifers.

Can he therefore also tell us why in the past year he has spent thousands of pounds of

taxpayers' money arguing before the European Court of Human Rights that it is essential for ministers to keep the decision-making power over mandatory lifers and not leave it to the Parole Board.

NUALA MOLE
Director
The Aire Centre
London SW2

Sir: The Home Secretary's calculation that his draconian sentencing proposals would increase the prison population by 10,000 (rather than the 30,000 predicted by penal reformers) is based on three false assumptions.

First, the White Paper estimates that the proposals' deterrent effect "will reduce the requirement for prison places by 20 per cent." This is a

breath-taking assumption that flies in the face of experience. All available research evidence indicates that increases in the severity of sentencing have no discernible deterrent effect on crime rates.

Second, it claims that the virtual abolition of early release will not affect the prison population because courts "will take full account" of these changes when sentencing. Yet this would require a large reduction in sentence lengths, which is extremely unlikely in the current harsh climate. If judges are now fiercely attacked as allegedly soft for passing, say, a four-year sentence, are they really likely to cut such a sentence to two years and run the gauntlet of even more savage criticism?

Third, the White Paper

argues that sentences for offenders outside the mandatory sentence categories "will not be affected to any significant extent as an indirect result." Yet history shows that, when legislation sends an overall signal that greater or less severity is desired, this invariably has a spill-over effect into sentencing generally.

These highly optimistic assumptions have led the Government to plan new prison places for only a third of the likely increase. The result will be to overcrowd already over-stretched prisons even further, ruining the prospects for a constructive penal system for decades to come.

PAUL CAVADINO
Chair
Penal Affairs Consortium
London SW9

Taxes well spent on roads

Sir: Emma Must of Transport 2000 looks for curbs on lorries (Letters, 31 March).

Lorries formed only a small part of the Government's need to create a 15-year programme to repair and reinforce bridges. The general increase in road traffic, age-related decay and continuous underspending on infrastructure all contributed to make it necessary. Certainly by 1999 we need to strengthen some bridges to accommodate the 40-tonne vehicles used throughout the rest of Europe. But we will enjoy both economic and environmental benefits.

Obviously, heavy lorries create more road wear than cars. But so what? All types and weights of lorries pay taxes well in excess of their road wear costs.

Britain has the benefit of perhaps the most efficient freight transport industry in the world. Between 1968 and 1994 the number of lorries fell by 25 per cent while the average work done increased by 300 per cent, a remarkable record.

The UK spends a lower percentage of GDP on transport than almost every other country in Europe. Rather than plan against the lorry we should be planning for it to benefit both the economy and the environment. Almost everything that we use or consume is produced by a lorry journey and, for the vast majority of freight transport movements, there really is no sensible alternative.

GEORGE DROSSSETTER
Head of Media Relations
The Freight Transport
Association
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Sir: The AA has not proposed privatisation of roads or increasing the tax burden on the average car-owning family ("Ministers axe plan to cut pollution", 2 April). What the AA wants is reform of our archaic system of transport finance and motoring taxation.

Elsewhere in Europe, decisions on transport are bound together with the funds to deliver them. In the UK the curse of our annual public expenditure round allows capital spending to be raided to balance short-term needs. This leads to a massive waste of money, with delayed preventative maintenance, and the preparing of endless projects that never arrive. The result is a low-grade infrastructure from which all travellers suffer.

What the AA is calling for is reform of the system so that the average family enjoys a better return for what it pays.

JOHN DAWSON
Director of Policy
Automobile Association
Basingstoke, Hampshire

Sir: A solution to the problem of "Why it's a slow life even in the fast lane" (5 April) would be to make it an offence to take more than 10 seconds to overtake. Although this would be difficult to enforce, it would in time change driver behaviour. No longer would we witness one vehicle travelling at 65mph overtaking another at 63mph, causing an immense queue behind.

DR EDMUND FURSE
Department of Computer
Studies
University of Glamorgan
Pontypridd

Forced back into Moscow's arms

Sir: In your leading article on 3 April ("Back in the USSR"), you acknowledge the right of Belarus and others to forge closer links with Russia. Yet, with regard to Bulgaria, you state that Western leaders should remind Boris Yeltsin that "the independence of Eastern Europe is absolutely not up for discussion".

Exposing its economy to the rigours of market forces over the last few years has caused many Bulgarian businesses to collapse, resulting in unemployment and inflation. These factors contributed to the former Communists being returned to power in the democratic elections of December 1994. Bulgaria's leaders would undoubtedly have broad public

support for closer ties with Russia.

In order to ensure that Bulgaria does not turn its back on recent reforms, investment from the West is required rather than your bellicose statements. It is to be hoped that the annual meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to be held in Sofia this week, may catalyse such activity.

MICHAEL J RHODES
Harpenden, Hertfordshire



Subtleties: Afghan horsemen struggle for the prize. Photograph: Tom Pilstone

Afghanistan a victim of Cold War power play

Sir: I was interested to read Tim McGirk's article "Horsemen of Afghans' near-apocalypse" (1 April) and was sorry he did not understand our game of buzkashi. It is an ancient game of skill and horsemanship, the forerunner of polo. It has its own subtleties and customs

which Afghans, from Buzkashi playing regions will tell you.

Afghan politics were not chaotic and neither were its games until the West made Afghanistan into an arms depot in order to dismantle the Communists. It is ridiculous to say that Afghans have inflicted war

and devastation on themselves. Afghanistan has been destroyed by foreign powers. My country has been the victim of the Cold War and now the West has washed its hands of us.

NASRULLAH SAIFI
Exeter

National service for community

Sir: Mike Bird (letter, 1 April) cites an appalling crime committed by professional soldiers in Cyprus as an argument against reintroduction of national service. Violent crimes in the services are rare. The armed forces do an excellent job in developing discipline, self-respect and responsibility.

A national obligation to serve in the armed forces may well be politically unacceptable today. But I have no doubt that some form of obligation on all young people to do jobs of value to the community would help to promote caring and responsibility, and reduce the alienation and frustration which explain (but do not excuse) much juvenile crime.

JOHN HUNT
(Lord Hunt KG)
Henley-on-Thames

British Library on the move

Sir: The British Library regrets the cuts it has had to make to its activities and services, which Marianne Macdonald (report, 4 April) correctly states have been forced upon us by a shortfall in grant-in-aid from Government. In deciding how to live within its funding, the library has given very high priority to moving into and operating successfully from its new St Pancras building. Sacrifices have been made specifically to ensure a speedy move. Indeed, over recent months the library has actually accelerated its moving schedule, reflecting its high level of confidence in the Department of National Heritage's construction programme.

BRIAN LANG
Chief Executive
The British Library
London NW1

Offence against Good Friday

Sir: I am surely not the only Christian to be astonished and angered that you should have chosen Good Friday, the most solemn day of the Christian year, to print two cheap and gratuitously offensive headlines in your section 2.

On the cover you print a picture of the Last Supper, with the headline "The passion for food", and on page 13 you run an article on a sports commentator, headlined "The Jesus of cool". This is gutter journalism. One of the fundamental values of a humane society is an elementary respect for other people's deeply held beliefs. Do the staff of the *Independent* not understand this, or is it simply that they do not care?

EAMON DUFFY DD
Reader in Church History
University of Cambridge

BSE: science is doing all it can

Sir: Your leading article of 30 March suggests that the reason we cannot answer the question whether BSE is infectious to humans is that experiments which involve testing extracts of infected brains for foreign DNA or "mutated" protein were not done ten years ago when they should have been.

Such experiments on scrapie were performed as far back as the late 1960s (*Nature* 214, 764-766) and a large body of work leading to a relatively conclusive answer was carried out prior to the late 1980s.

Knowledge of the nature of the agent does not tell us whether it is infectious to humans. Species barriers preventing the transmission of spongiform encephalopathies between species are present in some cases but not others. Chimpazees appear to be susceptible to CJD but not to scrapie whereas goats are susceptible to CJD and to scrapie (*Cell* 40, 735-746). These results and many similar were known by the early Eighties. It seems hard to see how the Government could have ruled out the possibility of transmission of BSE to humans.

Experiments are being carried out in which genetically engineered mice carrying the human version of the prion protein involved in susceptibility to the disease have been exposed to BSE (*Nature* 378, 779-783). These experiments need to continue for a number of months before conclusions can be drawn. The construction and testing of the mice strains used was reported in 1994 and would have been the results of at least three years of work.

Your editorial also says that "it is all very well for visionary scientists such as Richard Dawkins to deliver us accounts of what makes us tick. It would be more useful if science was more open to the questions we need it to answer." Only a small fraction of research funds and time are spent doing the type of research popularised by Professor Dawkins. Most research does consist of exactly the sort of "grindingly boring" experiments your article suggests need doing. It is worth asking what the market would have been for a popular book discussing the dry facts of spongiform encephalopathies prior to the BSE outbreak.

JUSTIN POWELL
Cambridge

Sir: The response from scientists and laymen to your leading article on BSE and science reminds me of the comment of that great cynic George Bernard Shaw: "Science is always wrong; it never solved a problem without creating ten more."

M RIAZ HASAN
Harrow

A real turkey

Sir: Judy Allen asks (3 April) why we never eat turkeys' eggs. I once bought two turkeys' eggs from our local farm shop as a treat for my small son and myself. The taste was amazing – absolutely nothing. They tasted of less even than supermarket sliced bread. It was like eating jellied water. Judy Allen is certainly not missing anything.

PETER STOKOE
London SE5

DAVID AARONOVITCH Secret vices



Virtue – as Mrs Anne Turville of Wells in Somerset has found out this week – must often be its own reward. This week, an unhappy Mrs Turville, who uncovered the sordid secret of her boss (the town clerk) and told the town council, resigned from her job as clerk's assistant.

It is a simple and sadly typical tale. One fine morning, with the clerk engaged elsewhere, Mrs Turville – a respectable married woman of one and forty – was searching for an invoice concerning the town crier's laundry. The top drawer of the clerk's desk suggested itself as a likely place for the invoice to have secreted itself, so she opened it.

Inside was a pornographic magazine entitled *Escort* – a publication regrettably to be found on newsagents' shelves the length and breadth of Britain. You do not have to imagine Mrs Turville's shock, for she has given her own vivid description of it. "I was disgusted by what I found. I don't expect to find that kind of material when I go through his drawers, looking for invoices."

Worse was clearly to follow. Somehow Mrs Turville became apprised not only of the nature of the magazine, but also of its contents. It was "filthy, and had disgusting pictures of readers' wives", she said. Although the circumstances are a bit murky, presumably Mrs Turville's determination to carry out her duties – and to discover the missing invoice – required an examination of the revolting item, page by page. Her mounting distress as she did so can only be guessed at.

Mrs Turville (who, from her photographs is not a showy woman, eschewing fashionable diets and expensive make-up) put two and two together. "I knew he was up to something," she said, "because every time I stopped typing or walked towards his room I heard his drawer slam shut." She couldn't cope. "Knowing that magazine was in there was a mental pressure on me."

It is, I suppose, to the council's credit that they took her complaint seriously. A special meeting was called and a vote

was taken. The clerk survived by nine votes to seven, and it was suggested he seek counselling about his sex life. Mrs Turville herself, disillusioned, departed.

She should take heart. Her action will have served as a salutary lesson to the five million or so men who read dirty magazines. And, whereas the consequences of allowing her boss's solitary activities to go unchecked cannot be computed, now she has ensured that he has been quite properly shamed in front of the community, his wife and his two small children.

Fortunately a woman of Mrs Turville's character should have little trouble finding a new job. There are still institutions in Britain that require the highest moral standards – Eton College, for example. There the headmaster (a tougher cookie than the liberals of Wells) is clamping down upon drug-taking. Pupils may be subject to compulsory drug tests and room searches, to be administered by school matrons.

The problem confronting the school is that it is sometimes impossible to tell whether a pupil has been using drugs or not. Schoolwork, participation in games, social behaviour – all these may be entirely unaffected. Only a blood-test can reliably detect the scourge of drug-taking.

Strangely, the Eton decision was criticised in yesterday's *Daily Telegraph*, which complained that such tests might trap youngsters who only use drugs at home during the holidays, "which is not a matter for the school (but... for the parents)". Yet it is surely an odd morality that would allow one child to be expelled from school for term-time Ecstasy-dropping while another is permitted a pharmacy-full in the long vac.

A proper compromise would be for parents to administer tests themselves (samples can be collected by fitting false bottoms to lavatories, surreptitiously collecting nail-clippings or, in extremis, drawing blood).

This is essential because as with pornography, drug-taking is far too serious a matter to be overlooked simply because it is done in private and no one else is harmed.

QUOTE UNQUOTE

It's a bit like comparing plum pudding to caviar – Lord Hailsham, former Lord Chancellor, when asked whether he thought John Major was like Margaret Thatcher, but omitting to say which was which.

I don't think Labour's front bench would recognise a civil liberty if you sprayed it on their eyebrows – Brian Sedgmore, *Labour* MP. He passed away with a dignified maw, dying of liver failure like a true member – Katy Tatchell, deputy secretary of the *Chelsea Arts Club*, describing the demise of the club's cat, Orlando.

You might well ask why the dung beetle is included in the endangered species list. But the Environment Department says it should go on the list. That does not mean that if one comes across a dung beetle one has to be nice to it – Lord Patters, *countrywide* minister.

To be frank, which I am, I could easily have done without this measure. It is not scientifically necessary – Philippe Vasseur, French farm minister, on the slaughter of calves from Britain. I do not want to wear out my welcome – Gregory Peck, announcing on his 80th birthday that he was quitting acting after over 30 years. Cinema's what I call a fat art. You sit around eating and running up a phone bill – Mike McShane, comedian.

I won't just take off my knickers without good reason – Kate Beckinsale, actress, who has refused to disrobe in films.

0171 293 2000

PROFILE: Ian Botham

You'd be mad to do it, Beefy

Why a great England cricketer would make a terrible England selector. By Robert Winder

It is beginning to look like a typically English story. The campaign to get Ian Botham a job at the top of England cricket (a campaign driven, ironically, by the very papers that hounded Botham almost to death when he was a player) is swiftly threatening to turn into a farce. After England's poor showing in the World Cup recently there is a strong and understandable desire for a major shake-up at the top of the game. And Botham, the irreverent people's champion who played like a genius, drank like a navvy, strode up hill and down dale raising money for charity, and attacked everything in life head-on, seems like a natural for a role as Messiah. Nine people have applied for the two vacant posts, but Botham's is the name that is hogging the headlines.

That is partly because of the Byzantine way English cricket goes about these things. Only a week after a ludicrous episode in which a couple of counties organised a failed putsch against Ray Illingworth, the powers-that-be find themselves in an embarrassing spot once again. Yesterday the Test and County Cricket Board, the sport's

ruled body, circulated a letter to the counties whose votes will decide which two selectors should be added to the five-man panel. It looked like a clear attempt to head off Botham's bid. "At least one of the nominations," the letter read, "is, we believe, very heavily connected with the media." It went on to point out that such media connections (Botham writes a column in the *Mirror* and comments for Sky) are regarded as disqualifying. We believe? Very heavily con-

nected? It sounds as if the man they're talking about is part of some underworld mafia. This is the kind of language used by ancient judges cheekily pretending they haven't heard of the Beatles, and it will add grit to the mills of those who feel that a blast of Bothamesque air is just what the game needs.

On the face of it, things might seem to have come to a pretty pass when a man who is arguably England's best player ever (20,000 runs, 1,200 wickets) is regarded as an unsuitable chap to help pick the present team. But of course the issue isn't that simple.

The reluctance to accept Botham onto the selection panel is not simply because of Botham's long-held and barely disguised contempt for cricket's ruling class—his "gin-soaked dodderers" preceded Will Carling's "old tarts" by almost a decade; nor is it solely explained by Botham's sharp lack of enthusiasm for the chairman of selectors, Ray Illingworth ("If I had my way, I'd take him to the Traitor's Gate and personally hang, draw and quarter him"). It is undeniably true that nearly everything Botham has ever done has been dogged by



Can you picture this man as a sober selector watching hours of county cricket?

Phil O'Brien

have given the least thought to whether Botham would be any good at the job if he got it. Everyone in cricket knows that the man was a bloody marvel, but ask them whether he should be in charge and they tend to raise their eyes to the ceiling and laugh. It is not axiomatic that the greatest players make the best managers—Ray

with shock if they knew how much booze was put away by certain England players and myself between the Saturday night and the Monday when I hit my unbeaten 149 in the amazing Headingley Ashes Test." He did, indeed, play with a huge beery grin that day, and very wonderful it was too. But there wouldn't be many serious takers for a selector who judged players first and foremost by how well they held their drink.

To be a selector is to be part of a team of chaps in suits—you win some arguments, lose a few, and have to watch a depressing amount of county cricket by way of research. It calls for a sober-sided man (women needn't apply) of unusual patience, and Botham—as he exhilaratingly admitted in his autobiography—seems an implausible candidate. As a player, he made up for the notorious size of his appetites with the briefness of his attention-span. And he has a famously short fuse. As his autobiography delights in informing us, when things went wrong he used to go home, drink "a couple of bottles of brandy" and throw ashtrays and pizza at his wife. No wonder the selectors are trembling.

It is hard to believe, actually, that this is the job Botham wants. There is a much stronger case for him to be involved in the revving-up of the team itself—you sense he'd love to be down there with the boys, boasting about past triumphs, tipping beer over their heads, and rousing them on to greater things. More than that, he is a direct and forceful polemicist about the future of the game in this country. He wants the whole present structure torn up and rebuilt, and there are fewer and fewer people who would disagree with him on that.

His ideas on man-management, too, are pretty sound: his main observation about the present England team is that the lads don't seem to be enjoying it enough—and that is plainly true. But it would seem a classic compromise—almost a botched job—if he were to go on and become a selector.

There's no doubt that there's a mass of things he could do, but this might be too small a pond for a man of his hectic energy. It would be like giving Pavarotti a part in the chorus; you just know that, like the noisy brat in the infants' school choir, he'd end up spoiling it for everyone else.

His main observation about the present England team is that the lads don't seem to be enjoying it enough

controversy; brawls, court cases, scandalous headlines and all. But even this does not properly explain why he is being cold-shouldered. The most telling case against Botham is that the very qualities that made him such a brilliant grandstanding player are precisely the ones unlikely to make him an effective selector.

In all the column inches devoted in recent days to the Botham case ("Lord's Letter Knives Botham ... Let's all Boycott Beefy") hardly any

Illingworth might be a case in point. But in England these days there is a kind of celebrity-hysteria that finds it hard to think further than attention-grabbing big names.

But Botham's own huge reservoir of natural talent led him to be famously impatient with those less gifted than himself—which included almost everyone. And he was, just as famously, a reckless individualist and bon vivreur. "Cricket's hierarchy," he wrote last summer, "would probably pass out

with shock if they knew how much booze was put away by certain England players and myself between the Saturday night and the Monday when I hit my unbeaten 149 in the amazing Headingley Ashes Test." He did, indeed, play with a huge beery grin that day, and very wonderful it was too. But there wouldn't be many serious takers for a selector who judged players first and foremost by how well they held their drink.

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The cartel they don't want you to drive

Supermarkets form an oligopoly that denies real consumer choice, argues David Nicholson-Lord

It is a tribute to the success of supermarkets that many of us enter them with a moderate shopping list and leave with a bulging trolleyful of goods—and a lingering sense of bemusement at how it happened.

Sainsbury's, Tesco, Safeway and company have made an industry out of binge shopping, turning their knowledge of what makes us buy things into a market dominance that would have been unthinkable a generation ago. And the bigger they have grown, the more ambitious they have become.

The car is the latest addition to the goods and services you may shortly find in your nearest superstore. Korean motor manufacturer Daewoo is to open a showroom in a Sainsbury's Savacentre store at London Colney, just off the M25 in Hertfordshire. It is thought to be the first link of its type between a car firm and a supermarket chain. Almost certainly, it will not be the last.

For the ordinary impulse-driven shopper lost adrift in a glittering sea of consumerism, there is at least a consolation: you can't fit a car into a supermarket trolley. For the motor industry, however, it is a different story. In many parts of Britain, individual stores account for more than 25 per cent of sales—the usual definition of a monopoly. This success has been achieved, in part, because supermarkets give us what we think we want. They offer, through novel and "exotic" goods, the chance to experiment with our identity. They also offer variety, convenience and efficiency—big parks for our cars, 15,000-20,000 products to choose from, the opportunity to satisfy all our shopping needs in one trip—the so-called "one-stop shop".

In an increasingly hurried age, the one-stop shop has an obvious appeal. The superstores, which we still mistakenly conceive of as grocery outlets, now contain books, newspapers, flowers, hardware, clothes, dry-cleaning and pharmacy outlets, coffee shops,



Supermarkets thrive on turning 'a few things' into a back-seat full of booty

Dave Caulkin (AP)

hair-dressing salons and crèches. And since the big chains have three quarters of the food and drink market, but only a tenth of the non-food market, it is in the latter sector that most of the growth potential lies and which they have thus chosen to target.

The supermarket chains have had some powerful allies in their rise to dominance. In the Eighties, *laissez-faire* planning allowed them to concrete over out-of-town sites with sprawling supermarkets; the recent belated attempt by the Department of the Environment to halt this exodus and the destruction of town centres it entailed still looks unconvincing. And the Government, for all its early pluralistic rhetoric, has been an ineffectual enforcer of competition policy. Instead, it has uncritically accepted the clichés of the global marketplace, arguing that on a world economic stage, Britain needs giant

players and the bigger these are, the better. Industry wisdom—in other words, conventional wisdom—also suggests a future dominated by global leviathans.

The truth, however, is that the rise of the superstores is resistible. Political and social choices just make it seem as though there is no alternative. And those choices carry costs.

The first concerns that overworked word "community". One does not need to romanticise the high street or the town centre to conclude that it embodied something about civic identity, neighbourliness and a sense of wider allegiances—what used to be called "public spiritedness"—which are wholly excluded from the sanitised interiors of the superstore. Supermarkets have helped to destroy this and have replaced it with something patently inferior, to do solely with con-

sumption. The social costs of this, such as costs of crime, are impossible to measure accurately but are probably enormous. Moreover, in an age when we must consider the environmental impact of our lifestyles, we can no longer afford such a one-dimensional approach to consumption.

The second issue is power. Nationally, no superstore technically constitutes a monopoly: Sainsbury's and Tesco just about muster a 25 per cent national market share between them. Yet, despite their much-vaunted competitiveness, they behave almost like clones, with one chain's cut-prices or customer loyalty scheme quickly emulated by another. In reality, they are an oligopoly—an unelected corporate elite which increasingly acts as the arbiter of a nation's tastes and rewards itself handsomely for so doing.

The elite is composed of businessmen and devoted to the bottom line. It leads from behind, eschews experimentation and operates middle-range safety-first policies. Hence, for example, the supermarkets' habit of choosing the more popular, fatty and sugary foods for their promotions rather than healthy alternatives. Hence, too, the relative absence of organic products on supermarket shelves and the complaints of food producers that to satisfy supermarket requirements, they must produce a standardised, uniform product, usually doused in chemicals.

The extent of the commercial power wielded by the big chains means such complaints are rarely voiced in public. In effect, a new paternalism has arisen—brought about, paradoxically, by the exercise of consumer choice. Not only should this prompt questions about the concept of consumer sovereignty in a complex economy. It also raises a disturbing prospect—that when the dominance of the big supermarket chains is nearing the 100 per cent mark, we may stand among the aisles of products, marvel at the breadth and novelty, and never realise what we are missing.

Cross between religion and real life

Early Europeans could relate to the Crucifixion in their own culture, says Matthew Cragoe

Tomorrow, on Easter Day, services will be held across the country to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ. They will celebrate a decisive moment in God's relationship with man, when the resurrection of his only son vividly demonstrated to ordinary people the potential for eternal life.

This is one of the most powerful images in the Christian faith, but there is little understanding of just how significant it has been through the ages to Europeans. A story that sprang from the Middle East struck, in its particular details, a chord with traditional peasant beliefs. As a result, however unintentionally, the story sounded utterly convincing to a European peasant, who would have been left in no doubt that this man did, in fact, die, and was truly brought back to life on Easter Day, rather than merely revived after a dreadful ordeal.

To appreciate just how convincing the story was, it is necessary to reflect on the biblical images of Christ's Passion. There is the "sacred head ... scornfully surrounded with thorns", the nails through the hands and the feet, and the "sacred body pierced" from which "blood and water both proceed" that are highlighted in Anglican hymns for Passion tide. Thus, when we survey the Cross, we see precisely what the biblical accounts offered by the Apostles would lead one to expect. There is the crown of thorns mockingly placed on Christ's head, the nails through his hands and feet, the final gaping wound where the soldier stabbed at his side with a spear.

The thorns, the gash in the side and the nails in the feet would all, in European culture, have carried an extra significance given the popular beliefs and practices surrounding death and burial which were widespread in earlier times.

The key to unlocking the additional meaning of these symbols is the belief widely held historically that the dead were capable of returning from the spirit world to claim the lives of those still living in this world. To prevent the dead returning, many cultures symbolically tied together the feet of the deceased. It was also common, particularly when plague was ravaging a community, to disinter corpses so as to "kill" them properly, and thus

end their nefarious preying on the living population.

What people often found upon opening the grave helps explain a number of burial customs. Corpses that had been buried for several months sometimes looked very much alive when the coffin was opened. The top layer of skin might have slipped to reveal "new" and, therefore pink flesh underneath. The corpse might be bloated from the gases produced during slow decomposition of the body, and thus look surprisingly healthy, whilst the bacterial action involved could make the body feel warm and the blood in the veins liquid. And these forces, the warmth, and the pressure of gas sometimes forced blood out of the body's natural exit points, including the mouth.

It is to the conjunction of these physical characteristics of decomposition and the belief in the "living dead" that the cultural historian Paul Barber ascribes the folkloric belief in vampires throughout continental Europe. And he suggests that many burial practices were clearly intended to pre-empt the possibility of the dead returning to this world. In particular, Barber notes how attempts were made to prevent the bloating of the corpse, whether by slitting open the gut before burial or by the inclusion of sharp objects such as thorns inside the coffin, so as to puncture the corpse once swelling began.

Taken in this context, it is easy to understand how the figure of Christ on the Cross, with feet nailed together, the side slit open and the head topped with thorns, took on fresh meaning in traditional societies. The episode came to symbolise ultimate death, from which no return could be possible. The impact of this image upon those who lived in the midst of beliefs relating to death, outlined above, can be imagined. The often poor and illiterate peasant was confronted in the Crucifixion with a recognisable symbol of final, irreversible, human death. All of this was made only more powerful by the image of tomorrow, Easter Sunday—the miracle of the Resurrection.

The writer is senior lecturer in British History at the University of Hertfordshire

"Between a third and a half of all cancers are caused by eating the wrong types of food"

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by Vernon Coleman

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UK GROWTH & INCOME						
Glaxo-Wellcome	370	200	2.5	72.15	130.8	1
Shedden Holdings	274	500	28.8	132.9	125.9	2
Murray UK Foods	101	100	200.5	137.8	131.8	3

Equities High Income	294	600	258	1405	175	18
Bonds High Income	488	1000	729	3084	992	77
F&C UK Income	672	300	52	1252	249	24

Global Com Inc.	8/91	500	254	9304	1749	21	
H Overseas Acc	12/74	500	574	18550	1886	85	Mar
H Worldwide Acc	7/88	500	85	1426	6204	56	Feb

ACI Automations & Consulting	Acc273	500	25.6	256.0	132.8	1
Grande Prix Australia	281	500	26.6	434.38	137.6	2

Foreign Pacific Growth	8894	1000	1987	25728	1948	58
Foreign Securities	492	500	213	8824	982	60
Foreign Pacific	4483	500	606	6739	1061	57

over the age of 18	75.7	100.0	100
aged 18 and under	24.3	100.0	100
includes funds that are less than one year old			

Lincoln Nat. Airport	92.4	1836	Winch
Lincoln Nat. Managed 3	221.7	564.4	Winch
Lincoln Nat. Managed 4	265.6	2798	Winch
Lincoln Nat. Schroeder St	446.8	on 1	Winch

Investor Usage	382.7	2002
100% Key Managed	8725	2002
Unit Fund Mixed	15400	2002

A schematic diagram of a two-dimensional lattice. The lattice is represented by a grid of points. A central point is labeled '1'. Points are numbered 1 through 10. A path is indicated by arrows starting from point 1, moving to point 2, then to point 3, and finally to point 4. The lattice is bounded by a dashed line.

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Markets set for fresh turmoil over US job figures

DANIELLE ROBINSON
New York
TOM STEVENSON
London

US Treasury bonds plunged more than two points, with yields soaring to their highest level in eight months yesterday, as strong US employment data wiped out what hopes remained of one more interest rate cut.

With equity markets closed in the US, as in the UK and most of Europe, there was no repeat of the 170-point dive when equivalent payroll figures a month ago stoked up fears of resurgent inflation and higher borrowing rates. But both Wall Street and London will be on a high state of alert when trading resumes after the Easter break.

News of an additional 140,000 non-farm jobs created in March double the 70,000 market forecast - and a smaller than expected downward revision of the huge 705,000 February payroll increase to 624,000, confirmed that the American economy was growing at a healthy pace. The growth would have been even sharper if manufacturing employment had not slumped thanks to a strike at General Motors.

"If the economy keeps growing like this, the Fed is going to worry about rising wages," said Cynthia Latta, an economist at DRI/McGraw Hill. "They certainly are not going to push rates lower."

Worries that the figures might signal a tightening of monetary policy sent the 30-year Treasury bond price skidding to a price of 89.16 from a previous close of 91.10. Its yield soared to 6.82 per cent, the highest level since August last year, up from Thursday's close of 6.67 per cent.

The key 30-year June futures contract suffered an even worse beating, slumping more than two points to crash through what had been a major support level. It fell through the support marker of 110.03 to close at 109.13, down from its previous close of 111.20.

"The January easing by the Fed may turn out to be the last in this cycle," said Kevin Flanagan, economist at Wall Street brokerage firm Dean Witter Reynolds. "I am not ready to talk about tightening but I think the Fed is going to be neutral from here on."

Patrick Dimick, a Treasury analyst at CS First Boston, said the concern was that the March

data had pushed the three-month average gain in payrolls to 206,000, a jump from the 142,000 average increase in the fourth quarter of last year. "You have to start considering a Fed tightening," he said.

Although trading was limited yesterday, with the stock market closed and the bond market plunging, analysts said the plunge in bond prices was enough to raise expectations of further sharp falls in both stocks and bonds when full trading resumes on Monday.

"Bonds have been absolutely crushed," said Eric Wall, treasury market analyst at MMS International in Chicago. "People will return on Monday and look at the June contract in horror."

"The concern is that when the rest of the market comes back next week, you will probably see rates continue to move higher," added Flanagan.

Some predict the 30-year bond yield will widen to between 7.0 and 7.25 per cent by July. That could spell disaster for stocks, as 7 per cent is considered a key point at which fund managers will start thinking about moving some of their equity holdings to cash and money market investments.

Chancellor 'has little scope for tax cuts'

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke is unlikely to meet his target for growth this year, but has little scope to either reduce the cost of borrowing or cut taxes, according to a report from the Treasury's panel of "wise persons" due to be published next Tuesday.

A majority of the six expert advisers predict interest rates might have to be raised later this year or early next, in forecasts which emphasise the political sensitivity of the judgements the Chancellor will have to make.

None of the economists on the panel of independent forecasters thinks the economy will grow by as much as the 3 per cent Mr Clarke predicted in last November's Budget. Professor Patrick Minford of Liverpool University and Gavin Davies of the American investment bank Goldman Sachs are forecasting growth below 2 per cent.

Yet only Professor Minford believes there is room for more than another quarter point fall in base rates. He thinks the Chancellor should slash 2 percentage points off rates to boost growth to 3 per cent in 1996. There would be no danger of inflationary pressure while there is so much slack in the economy, according to Professor Minford.

He is well known for his view that the Conservatives' labour market reforms have boosted the economy's potential, allowing faster growth without inflation.

That view is not shared by other members of the panel. Mr Davies forecasts inflation slightly above its 2.5 per cent target at the end of this year even with growth as low as 1.9 per cent. Professor Tim Congdon of Lombard Street Research, the other City member of the panel, has recently sounded warnings about the danger of rising inflation. He thinks the economy will expand faster than its long-run trend rate of growth in the second half of this year and 1997, making inflation of 5 per cent by 1999 a possibility.

The other "wise persons" - Kate Barker of the CBI, Bridget Rosewell of consultancy Business Strategies and Martin Weale of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research - predict higher growth. But even Ms Rosewell, the most optimistic, thinks the economy will expand by only 2.7 per cent this year.

Her relative optimism is based on the same argument as Mr Clarke's - the expectation that tax cuts and windfalls such as building society flotations and maturing Tassas will put a tail wind behind consumer spending.

None of the six, apart from Professor Minford, believes that further interest rate cuts will be possible if the Chancellor is to get near his inflation target. The five predict that base rates will start to rise by later this year or early next year.

The panel is, unusually, unanimous about the difficulty Mr Clarke will face if he is hunting for tax cuts in the next Budget. The disappointingly high level of government borrowing means that returning the public finances to the levels set out in last year's budget will limit the scope for tax cuts.

Ms Barker said: "There is not a good background for major tax cuts that are not matched by additional cuts in public spending." "Most experts think it will be difficult enough for the Government to stick to the spending limits it has already set."

The panel will publish a report on the amount of spare capacity in the economy in May.



Off-target: The panel of independent advisers agrees on the political sensitivity of the decisions facing Mr Clarke



Slowdown: Professor Minford (top) and Gavin Davies expect growth below 2 per cent



Business angel: Kevin Leech made a decision to back the kind of people banks would not help

The venture capitalist who turned a £750,000 stake in ML Laboratories into £370m talks to Magnus Grimond

Biotech backer's new baby is caravan parks

A drop-out from the educational system, Kevin Leech is the unlikely venture capitalist. The son of a Manchester undertaker, this small, somewhat crumpled figure with a lip might be mistaken for a salesman. He is actually one of Britain's most powerful business angels.

Wealthy individuals who risk their money backing fledgling businesses tend to be a secretive lot, and Kevin Leech is no exception. His bashfulness is understandable, given the ever-present threat of unwanted supplicants, but the exterior impression is belied by a sure touch with investment. Since 1964 he has turned an original £3,000 investment in his father's business into a portfolio now valued at several hundred million pounds.

Much of his success has been based on one investment: ML

Laboratories, one of a rapidly growing band of fledgling pharmaceutical groups. In January, the extent of that success became clear when Mr Leech raised £37.5m from reducing his stake in the group, leaving a remaining holding still valued at around £340m.

Not bad going for an original investment of £750,000 in 1982 and a well-timed exit to boot. His sale marked the shares' recent peak.

Having reduced his holding to 54 per cent, Mr Leech is already turning his attention to his other investments. At the end of last month Miller Laboratories, the vehicle through which he originally invested in ML, announced it was injecting £1.5m into another of the so-called biotech babies, Proteus International, with the option of raising its stake to just under 30 per cent.

His interests range wider than biotech companies, though. Queensborough Holdings is at present one of the more intriguing possibilities. Like ML and many of his other business opportunities, this one arose from contacts in Jersey, where Mr Leech, who remains a keen Manchester United supporter, now makes his home.

The group, acquired with partner Stuart Sim, has been through a number of incarnations over the years, but it is now being rapidly turned into a leisure business. On Thursday, Queensborough announced a £9.2m cash-raising to pay for three acquisitions which take it overseas to France for the first time. It already owns the Needles Pleasure Park, a 20-acre visitor attraction on the Isle of Wight, and in February paid £13.5m for the Cheddar Gorge Cheese Company.

The latest passion, however, is caravan parks and the recent deal increases the number of caravan pitches owned by the group to 6,000, making it one of the market's biggest. It is not something to set the middle class pulse racing, but Mr Leech is confident there is great potential in this highly fragmented industry.

"A lot of people cannot afford to go on Continental holidays, nor do they want to. A lot of people want second homes, but they can't buy the big freehold second homes, so as people are living longer, as people are retiring earlier, as people are working less hours, the leisure parks are only a gallon of petrol away from where they live, so it's affordable", he says.

Queensborough is already the third-largest operator of caravan parks in the UK, behind

Park Worlds, part of the Rank Organisation, and the privately owned Bourne Leisure. Now installed as chairman, Mr Leech is hoping to cash in on income growth in the sector, currently said to be running at around 8 to 10 per cent a year in the UK, and is ready eventually to expand into Europe.

ML Labs, Proteus and Queensborough are just the most public results of Mr Leech's move into venture capital in the early 1980s. Recently his Jersey connections led him to pick up Fletcher Powerboats, the biggest maker of trailer boats in Europe, from Hornby Group.

His own start in business over 30 years ago was as a result of the death of his father. But he had to turn to the family solicitor for the personal guarantee which allowed him to raise the £3,000-odd he needed to buy out the rest of the family. That experience left an indelible impression.

"In 1964 when I wanted help, nobody would help me. There were no venture capital funds then. No BES funds. There were no tax breaks for people. So I made a conscious decision ... that I would back

people when banks couldn't help. Banks can only help when you are successful. Banks can only help when you have got collateral."

Mr Leech and Mr Sim also claim a different approach from corporate venture capital backers by giving managements more time to succeed. "We hang on until we get them right and if it means buying another company to bolt them on, we get it right. If it means changing the management, we get it right," says Mr Leech.

Mr Sim emphasises the importance of ensuring both that the individuals remain keen and that the product and its price are right. They are less concerned about the return year-on-year. "A lot of businesses fail ... and they had no need to fail if they had been given more leeway by the bank."

With Mr Leech's ability to pick winners and Mr Sim's financial disciplines, the two men may have something to teach the slick venture capital groups operating out of the City. It is an impressive performance for an investor who left school at 15 with eight O-levels and failed to complete his articles as a chartered accountant.

Reporting companies find the 'feelgood' factor

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

When the Easter weekend falls this early in April it provides a welcome break for analysts and investors, who can feel pretty battered by the annual reporting season's torrent of financial information. Within the past month alone, more than 500 quoted companies have reported figures, mainly full-year results for 1995.

With so many figures filling the financial pages, it can be difficult to see the wood for the trees, so the *Independent*, in association with Hemmington Scott, the financial information publisher, has done a survey of the results for the largest companies reporting recently. Since the end of January, when the reporting season really starts to get under way, 58 of the constituents of the FTSE 100 index of Britain's largest companies have reported results. While the "feelgood" factor has eluded the rest of the country, the numbers suggest that corporate Britain is in

pretty good shape - profits have been surprisingly good and dividends notably generous. Of the 58 companies, which includes a representative range of retailers, banks, builders, oil companies and leisure stocks, only 10 announced lower profits than a year ago, with 48 reporting growth.

Disappointments included P&O, the cruises to ferries group, where investor unrest forced Lord Sterling to formulate a £1bn cash-raising exercise to attempt to boost shareholder value. Builders' merchants Wolsley and Tarmac fell as the construction sector's woes continued. British Gas's problems persisted and Unilever struggled to cope with pricing pressures. But these were the exceptions that proved the positive rule during February and March.

A raft of insurance companies benefited from an uptick in that sector's pronounced cycle and General Accident, Sun Alliance, Legal & General, Commercial Union, Royal Insurance and the Prudential all recorded big jumps in profits. The rest of

the financial sector also joined in the fun, with Barclays, HSBC, National Westminster and Lloyds TSB notching up at least double-digit rises in profits.

Industry was not to be left out. ICI continued to ride the chemicals cycle and to benefit from its relentless cost cutting in recent years to see its profits jump from £408m to £927m. BOC, often seen as a bell-weather of the world economy, increased its first quarter return by a healthy 13 per cent from £89m to £101m.

Recovery from previous disasters was a recurrent theme and Kingfisher, the Woolworths,

B&Q and Superdrug group, continued to put its recent problems behind it with a 28 per cent profit rise. Ladbroke reversed 1994's huge losses into a respectable £95m profit despite the assault on its betting arm by the National Lottery.

While the profits rises have been striking, what has been really noticeable about this year's reporting season is the extent to which companies are choosing to return value to shareholders, some by share buy-backs such as Guinness's, many with dividend increases way in excess of the rate of inflation.

As the table shows, some of

the increases have been extremely chunky and of the 58 companies included in the survey only Rediff and reduced its payout, Wolsley's 5 per cent increase, which puts it in the laggards category, still represents a dividend rise worth almost twice the increase in the cost of living.

Out of 58 companies, 29, or half the total, increased their payout by more than 10 per cent. As one analyst quipped, you can get a better return on your cash by investing in Abbey National shares than by putting the money in an Abbey account - and the income grew by 22 per cent last year.

The *Independent* survey confirms the message from the equity market strategists contacted this week, who said the results season emerged slightly more positive than they had expected. Bob Semple, at NatWest Markets, said that of the 163 companies he tracked, 23 had disappointed compared with 46 which had turned out better than forecast.

Paul Walton at Goldman

Sachs took a more jaundiced view, seeing too much optimism in consensus profits growth forecasts of about 11 per cent for the current year. He believed the cycle in operating margins was reaching a peak and saw an additional risk to the equity market in bond yields which he forecast to rise.

But the main reason for his bearish stance related to political risk, which he thought the City was yet to take seriously. With the market likely, in his view, to end the year at 3,400, compared with Thursday's close of 3,755.6, he recommended taking shelter in late cycle stocks such as stores, services, transport and chemicals.

The bull argument was provided by Mark Tinker at HSBC James Capel, who focused on dividend growth, which he expected to continue at between 8 and 9 per cent for the rest of the year. Compared with inflation of less than 3 per cent, he said that represented an unusually good real return and he expects markets to reach a year-end target of 4,000.

STOCK MARKETS					
Dow Jones					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low
FTSE 100	3755.60	closed		3781.30	3639.50
FTSE 250	4386.30	closed		4385.30	4015.50
FTSE 350	1891.30	closed		1891.30	1816.60
FTSE 100	2109.64	closed		2109.64	1954.06
FTSE 250	1869.53	closed		1869.53	1789.25
FTSE 350	5639.74	closed		5639.74	3832.08
FTSE 100	2160.00	closed		2160.00	1934.70
FTSE 250	11594.99	closed		11594.99	10073.99
FTSE 350	2252.42	closed		2252.42	1951
Source: FT Information					

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling					
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year
UK	5.94	6.34	8.06	8.41	8.16
US	5.34	5.56	6.31	7.08	6.64
Japan	0.53	0.93	1.02	2.72	7.35
Germany	3.25	3.28	8.39	7.94	7.14
Money Market Rates					
Bond Yields					
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year
UK	5.94	6.34	8.06	8.41	8.16
US	5.34	5.56	6.31	7.08	6.64
Japan	0.53	0.93	1.02	2.72	7.35
Germany	3.25	3.28	8.39	7.94	7.14
MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year
Save Group	404	56	16.8	Cadbury Schweppes	436
Tarmac	126	13	11.5	T & M	166
Unit News & Media	69	11.2	Hollands Higgs	178	8

CURRENCIES					
£/\$					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
\$ (London)	1.5275	+0.16c	1.6035	£ (London)	0.6547
\$ (NY)	1.5306	+0.51c	1.6110	£ (NY)	0.6533
DM (London)	2.2615	+0.45p	2.2184	DM (London)	1.4805
¥ (London)	163.44	+10.38	138.703	¥ (London)	107.00
₹ (London)	83.6	+0.2	84.7	₹ (London)	85.8
OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent	20.25	+0.27	17.84	RPI	150.9
Gold S	395.05	-1.55	392.30	GDP	107.0
Gold £	257.61	-1.28	244.65	Base Rates	-6.00p

Investment and Savings

With effect from 6th April 1996, the interest rates for the following share and deposit accounts will be:

Type of Account	Gross % p.a.	Type of Account	Gross % p.a.
SPECIAL 80		HIGH RISE	
80 day's notice	5.40	80 day's notice	4.50
£100,000 and over	5.40	£100,000 and over	5.00
C.A.R. 1	5.15	£10,000 to £10,999	2.00
£10,000 to £10,999	5.15	£2,500 to £4,999	1.75
C.A.R. 1	5.15	£1,000 to £2,499	1.50
£25,000 to £49,999	4.51	£250 to £999	1.25
C.A.R. 1	4.51	£100 to £249	1.00
£10,000 to £24,999	4.22	£100 to £249	0.80
C.A.R. 1	4.22	£100 to £249	0.80
£5,000 to £9,999	3.50		
C.A.R. 1	3.50		
£2,500 to £4,999	2.77		
C.A.R. 1	2.77		
£1,000 to £2,499	2.00		
TOP 60			
60 day's notice	5.30		
£100,000 and over	5.15		
£50,000 to £99,999	4.25		
£25,000 to £49,999	3.00		
£10,000 to £24,999	2.25		
£2,500 to £9,999	2.00		
£1,000 to £2,499	1.75		

The interest rates on all other accounts will remain unchanged, except where individual notification is made. Interest will be paid gross to non-taxpayers subject to eligibility and the required registration. Otherwise interest will be paid after deduction of income tax at the appropriate rate.

The minimum investment and balance on the Society's Charity and Clients' Reserve accounts has been changed to £100. If the balance in these two accounts is below £100 for a period of 3 consecutive months or more, a charge of £1 per quarter will be debited to the account.

* Gross Compounded Annual Rate where the interest is re-invested in the account monthly.

† If the capital balance in the account is below or falls below this minimum initial investment, interest will be payable at the standard interest rate for the Investment Share Account (excluding bonus) for so long as the capital balance remains below the minimum.

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sport

Damage limitation not in Harlequins' thoughts

This time last year Harlequins were worrying about relegation. This time around, with essentially the same personnel, far from contemplating the drop, they are contemplating dropping in on Europe as they head for today's match against Bath at the Ricc.

Barring some improbable results in the run-in, a place among the elite will be Quins for the taking and it looks as though they may have the services of Ireland's hooker, Keith Wood, and the Neath and Wales lock, Gareth Llewellyn, when they begin their European campaign. Wood yesterday discussed a move to The Stoop, despite the Irish authorities' recent deal designed to keep their top talent at home.

Llewellyn's move will be subject to Welsh Rugby Union approval. They have said they want assurances from Harlequins that he will be released for all international squad training sessions and Wales matches.

David Llewellyn on a weekend that sees rugby union's Barbarians going to Cardiff

So it is no wonder that Harlequins, who have never beaten Bath in 11 league games, head west in upbeat mood. They are in second place two points behind Bath having scored 455 points, some 34 more than the leaders, and they are talking of winning. The ability has always been there, now there is added steel.

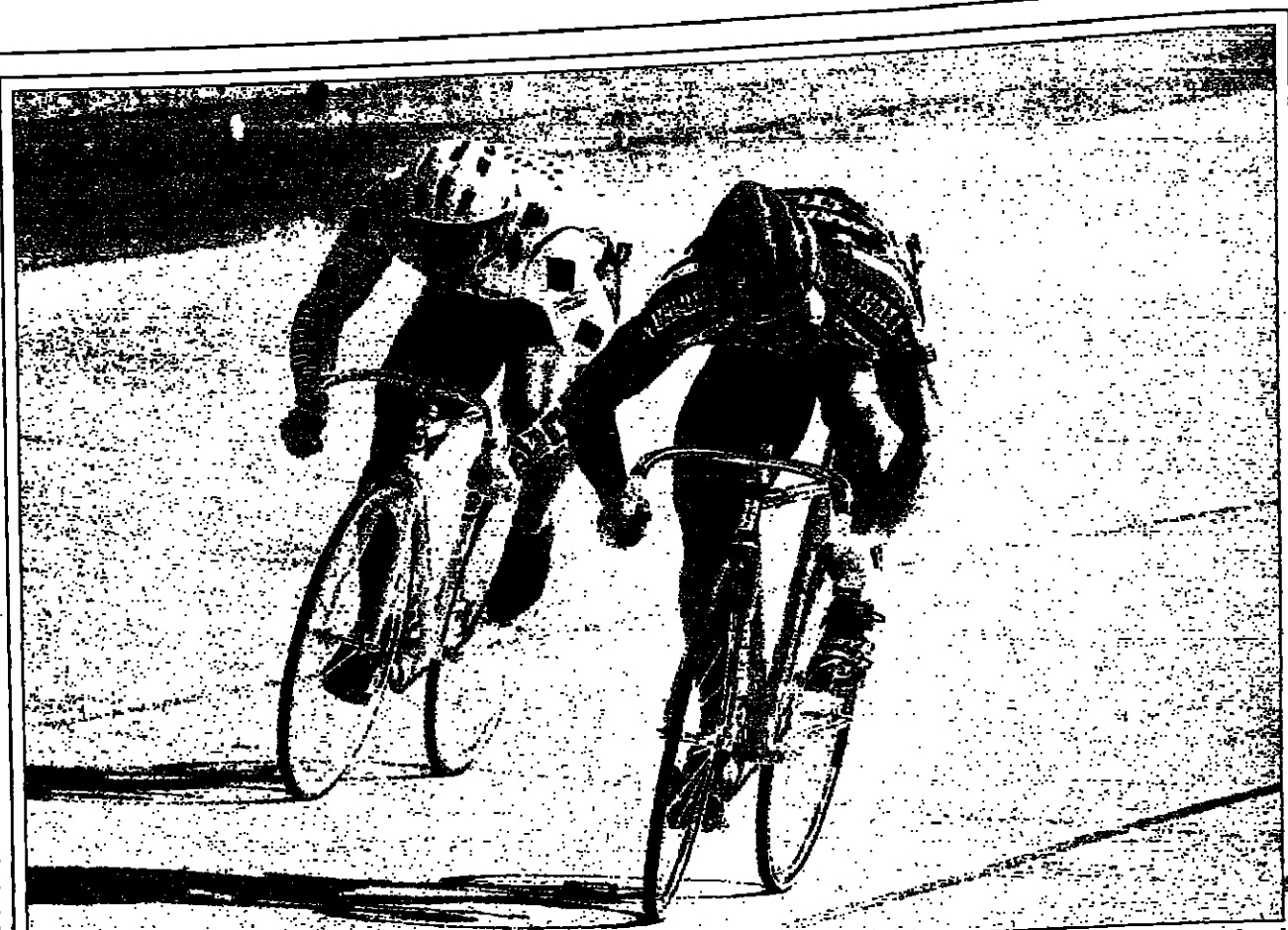
Their success has given the stand-off Paul Challinor a deal of personal satisfaction, because he had to start off in the third XV after missing pre-season training through injury. Osteopathy sorted things out and when the first choice, David Pears, was struck down by his injury jinx Challinor took his chance. The 26-year-old, who has been accused of being a kicking stand-off in the past, says there is a change of outlook at The Stoop.

"There is confidence," he explains. "Last year I had to kick because it was about the only time we went forward in a match. This year it is different. Thanks to Gareth Allison we are winning a lot of line-out ball so I now have other options. We normally go to Bath with damage limitation in mind. This time we are going there believing we have a chance."

Quins are unchanged from last week which means Chris Sheasby returns from the Hong Kong Sevens - his club were unhappy about his appearance for England in the tournament - to the ignominy of the bench. Bath, in contrast, welcome back sevens men Jon Sleightholme and Adedayo Adebayo. Ben Clarke is on holiday so the Scotland international Eric Peters is recalled.

Leicester, in third place, are still without Dean Richards but they too find room for another Hong Kong Sevens man, Neil Back, for the critical home game against fourth-placed Wasps. The London side have lost Damian Hopley who damaged knee ligaments in Hong Kong and is out for the season, while stand-off Guy Gregory returns on the squad rota system in place of Chris Braithwaite.

London Irish need a victory over Bedford to secure promotion to the First Division while in Wales Cardiff send out a callow side against a Barbarians XV which includes the former All Black John Gallagher and the veteran Rugby winger Eddie Saunders for a traditional fixture that is expected to attract a 15,000 crowd to the Arms Park. Most of Wales will be concentrating on the league where Neath travel to lowly Aberillery looking to extend their lead.



Pedal power: Alwyn McMath beats Alex Sims in a semi-final of the Champion of Champions Sprint at the international track cycling meeting at Herne Hill yesterday. McMath lost to Frederic Magne in the final. Photograph: Adam Scott

Sweden fight for 2-0 lead

Tennis

Thomas Enqvist rebounded from a difficult start and Jonas Bjorkman struggled to a five-set win to give Sweden a 2-0 lead against India yesterday in their Davis Cup quarter-final in Calcutta.

Bjorkman defeated Leander Paes 1-6, 6-4, 5-7, 6-3, 7-5 in a gruelling match that took more than three hours to complete while Enqvist had a slightly easier 6-7, 7-6, 6-1, 6-1 win over Mahesh Bhupathi.

Bhupathi, after winning the first set tie-break, broke Enqvist in the 10th game of the second set but squandered the next game with two double faults and two errors. He lost the tie-break and never recovered. All his 18 aces came in the first two sets.

In the first match, played at the peak of the heat, Bjorkman only found his game in the middle of the second set. By then he had dropped four of his first five service games.

By the beginning of the final set, both Bjorkman and Paes were drained by Calcutta's notorious heat and dampness - 90.5F and 62 per cent humidity.

Eleven deuces were recorded in the first two games and despite eight double faults in the last set, Bjorkman held his serve and finally broke Paes in the 11th game.

South Africa took a surprise 1-0 lead yesterday against Italy in their quarter-final in Rome. Marcos Ondruska beat Italy's top player, Renzo Furlan, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 win.

In Prague, Todd Martin powered his way past Petr Korda of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-4, 7-5 to give the holders, the United States, a 1-0 lead while Germany, without their leading players, Boris Becker and Michael Stich, went 1-0 behind to France in Limoges as Cedric Pioline, the US Open runner-up in 1993, beat David Prinosil, ranked No 40 in the world, 6-0, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3.

Martin puts Horner 'back in her corner'

Squash

Jane Martin pulled off an astonishing victory at the Leekes British Open in Cardiff yesterday when she defeated the third seed Liz Irving in the quarter-finals.

The former British junior champion triumphed 9-2, 6-9, 5-9, 9-7, 9-2 in 71 minutes to qualify for a semi-final against the defending champion, Michelle Martin, Irving's Australian team-mate.

Jane Martin, seeded 10th, revealed a level of mobility and tactics that England observers had been awaiting for some years.

From 6-7 down in the fourth game, she emerged as the stronger competitor, making just one error in two dozen rallies compared to 10 from the experienced Irving.

Michelle Martin, the top seed, had earlier removed Suzanne Horner, the British national champion, 9-6, 9-1, 9-3 in a 39-minute match that reversed the result of their recent meeting in the Abshot Open.

Horner, seeded six, was unable to deal with the athletic determination of an opponent who dismissed their Abshot match, in which the Yorkshire woman beat her for the first time, as just another game.

"It was nice to get quick revenge," the Australian said. "I have put Mrs Horner back in her corner."

The men's second seed, Rodney Eyles, won an all-Australian battle with Anthony Hill 15-10, 15-9, 15-7 in just half an hour.

Mark Chaloner - Jane Martin's training colleague - lost 15-6, 13-15, 15-8, 15-9 in the men's quarter-finals to Brett Martin, the elder brother of Michelle.

Martin, despite a weak ankle suffered 10 days ago was plainly intent on avenging Chaloner's victory over him in last November's World Open Championship.

The inventive Australian powered through the opening game, had to give way as Chaloner counter-attacked in the second but steadily took command of the court through the closing stages.

Hendry defiant after another setback

Snooker

Stephen Hendry will go into the World Championship at The Crucible, Sheffield, in a fortnight's time still looking for his first ranking title victory of the year after being beaten by Nigel Bond at the British Open in Plymouth yesterday.

The Scot succumbed to only his second defeat in 12 meetings with his stablemate Bond, losing their third-round match 5-4. Hendry, the five-times world champion, remained defiant after his defeat, however, and said: "What happened here will have no bearing on events at The Crucible. I haven't done well at this tournament in the last three years but have still gone on to win the world title."

Bond, runner-up to Hendry in last year's world championship, produced a stunning

clearance of 59 to the pink in the deciding frame after Hendry had missed a black with six reds left when leading 38-7. "It was terrible. I couldn't make a long pot to save my life," Hendry said. "I thought I'd get another chance as we both missed so many pots throughout the match. But credit to Nigel for that clearance."

Bond's success was his first over Hendry since the 1993 Regal Welsh Open. The world No 12 from Derbyshire admitted: "I thought I'd blown it. After I'd missed a couple of reds early on I just decided to go for it."

Stephen's beaten me so many times that I guess I owed him one. I have struggled to find my best form since the new year and it would be nice to win this event just before Sheffield."

Bond now meets Peter Ebdon today for a place in the semi-finals.

BIRDS EYE WISHES
YOU AND YOUR CHICKS
THE VERY
BEST FOR EASTER.

ONLY THE BEST PASSES THE BIRDS EYE.



April 6, 1996

GOLF: Next week's US Masters will end a way of life for one amateur. Tim Glover talked to him

Sherry sips at the big time

Gordon Sherry will turn professional sooner or later and the odds say it will be sooner, i.e. next Friday as opposed to Sunday. What ever happens, Sherry's last tournament as an amateur is the Masters at Augusta National which starts on Thursday and if he fails to make the half-way cut he will join the paid ranks before Saturday comes.

As the reigning amateur champion, Sherry is one of the special invitees to Georgia's exclusive garden party, the first major championship of the season. Although Bobby Jones, the man who built Augusta National and inspired the Masters 62 years ago, was the greatest amateur of all, the record of the Cornishman suggests that Sherry's appearances down Magnolia Drive will be limited. Amateurs do not hang around for the weekend of the Masters.

"If I win it," Sherry said, "I'll have a big party at the end." He did not laugh when he made the remark. Sherry will be 22 on Easter Monday and what concerns him is that he has a debt to pay, particularly to his parents, Anne and Bill. Anne teaches handicapped children. Bill is a retired policeman and they have raised the Bank of Scotland to fund a family excursion to America.

"I can't wait to turn professional," Sherry said. "Being an amateur and trying to play in tournaments is a nightmare. The stupid rules mean that I'm not allowed to get any expenses and once again my mum and dad have had to fork out. It's scandalous. I win the amateur, go abroad to represent Scotland on behalf of the Royal and Ancient and because of the ridiculous regulations it's my parents who end up paying. I could have done a few things but nothing that would have been legal. I can't sign anything until I turn pro."

Sherry had to decline an invitation to play in the Desert Classic in Dubai last month. "There was no point," he said. "It would have cost me well over £1,000 and that didn't include food or expenses for my caddy." He is not short of invitations or sponsors or management advice and will almost certainly sign for the Edinburgh-based company Carnegie next weekend. On the custom declaration form going out to Georgia he described himself as a student. On the return leg he can write: professional golfer.

As Sherry goes he is in the schooner class, 6ft 5in (three inches taller than his father) with a shoe size, 13, that has old Bill written all over it and at the top is a shock of ginger hair

which suggests he could understudy as a lighthouse in the Fifth of May. In every sense Sherry made a huge impression last summer which had agents clamouring for the number of his mobile phone.

After winning the Amateur Championship at Hoylake (where Bobby Jones won the Open in 1930, the last amateur to do so), he had a superb 100 per cent record in leading Scotland to the European team championship at Royal Antwerp and then finished fourth in the Scottish Open at Carnoustie behind Wayne Riley, Nick Faldo and Colin Montgomerie. No amateur had ever made the cut in the Scottish Open. It was the fourth-best performance by an amateur in a European Tour event and had he been a pro he would have won £30,000. As it was he won £1 off Tiger Woods, betting the American amateur champion

'I get annoyed when people treat me differently just because I play golf well'

he would finish higher than him.

Sherry received a special bottle of whisky from Carnoustie Golf Club. He responded: "This is the best links in the world [enthusiastic applause]... apart from Kilmarnock Barassie." That, of course, is his home course. The whisky is still on the shelf. "We're not drinkers," Anne said, "and Gordon doesn't touch a drop. With a name like ours we don't need to."

After Carnoustie, the dry Sherry enjoyed another fabulous week in the Open at St Andrews. In a practice round he played with Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus and got a hole in one at the eighth. In the second round of the championship, playing with Watson and Greg Norman (combined earnings £50m) Sherry (student grant) shot 71 to Watson's 76 and Norman's 74. "Did I get any sleep? Of course I did. I'm a student."

George Bush, following the three ball, remarked on Sherry's golf and added: "I hear he's a nice guy." Those around him, not counting men in raincoats, dark glasses and holsters, confirmed to the ex-President that Big Gordy was indeed one of the best. Nicklaus invited Sherry to

his tournament, the Memorial in Columbus (he will play in it later this year) and Norman said of him: "He's intelligent, likeable and nothing seems to faze him. He reminds me a bit of Ernie Els. I'm really really impressed with this kid and I can't say that about many youngsters I've played with around the world. The game needs a breath of fresh air and he's it." Watson, remarking that Sherry was large enough to play tackle for the Kansas City Chiefs, said: "He's got a great smile, a sense of humour... he's just a delightful guy. Besides that he can play."

It is not true that nothing fazes him. "The attention has put a strain on the whole family," he said. "I'd be lying if I said it wasn't difficult. It is nice for people to take an interest but with some it's almost hero worship and I'm not a big fan of that. I'm still the same person and I get annoyed when people treat me differently just because I play golf well. The phone never stops and I've got to be tougher. As a pro I'll be a small fish in a big pond."

By the time he brought a momentous year to an end by leading Britain and Ireland to victory over the United States in the Walker Cup at Royal Porthcawl, Sherry, fated and dined, was hitting the scales at 20st. This year he has done a Montgomerie and has lost three stone. "I like my mum's cooking too much," Sherry said. "I was overweight but not by that much. I'm not starving myself, I'm just being careful. Breakfast, lunch and dinner is all I need."

After the Walker Cup he returned to Stirling University to complete his studies for a degree in biochemistry. He will get the results in June. Sherry has not had a chance to play competitive golf this year but spent a month practising at Desert Mountain in Phoenix, as a guest of the owner Lyle Anderson, and two weeks at Valderrama. "I got a cheap flight," he said. Anderson also owns Loch Lomond GC and has made Sherry an honorary life member.

If he has saved a few bob on his own food bill, Sherry has another mouth to feed: he has employed a caddy, George Sprunt, alias Turnberry George, an experienced bagman on the circuit. In addition to playing in the Memorial (Big Jack laid down one condition, that the Scot was not missing any exams), Sherry has received invitations to the Kemper Open in America, the Benson and Hedges International, the Murphy's Irish Open, the Loch Lomond World Invitational and the Italian Open and also hopes



Gordon Sherry: 'The game needs a breath of fresh air, and he's it' Photograph: Allsport

to get into the English and Scottish Opens.

As for life on tour, Sherry has had a chat with his best pal, Stephen Gallacher, the nephew of Bernard, who turned professional earlier in the year. "I played nine events in a row last year so I know what it's like to play out of a suitcase," Sherry said. "It can't be much different from being an amateur. The only difference is that it's your living."

Augusta National offers amateurs on-course accommodation, a bedroom in the clubhouse, a bathroom, but Sherry declined. "People would know where I am and I'd get pestered. We're staying in a wee private house." A bodega of Sherry's will make the trip - parents, aunts, uncles and his elder brother Iain who has a handicap of eight. "He likes to describe himself as a lithographer," Sherry said. "He's a printer."

Sherry gets 10 tickets for the tournament but only two that will gain entry to the clubhouse. "I've already given them to mum and dad." At Augusta he will also be reunited with his coach, Bob Torrance. "The last time I saw him I said 'see you at the Masters'. Imagine that. It sounds fantastic doesn't it? See you at the Masters. If I win it I'll go ex-directory. No I won't. I'll emigrate." No he won't.

Old and new meet at Cowes

Sailing
STUART ALEXANDER

Ancient and modern combine in Cowes today as the Matthew, a replica of John Cabot's 1497 ship which took him from Bristol to Newfoundland, meets up with a near-40 strong fleet contesting the Royal Ocean Racing Club's Red Funnel Easter Regatta, including a clutch of boats limbering up for Commodore's Cup team trials.

Neither appreciated the chilly but fresh winds from the South-east, although the Matthew's master, David Alan Williams, will be ready for worse when he sets off for north America next year and has experienced much more misery on the world record-breaking run of the 92ft catamaran Enza when winning the Jules Verne Trophy.

The first boat to finish in Class One yesterday was Stephen Fein's Full Pelt, followed over the line at the finish of a 15-mile race in the central Solent by two

Mumm 36s, John Oswald's Destiny Angel and Tim Barrett's Bradamante.

First boat to finish in Class Two was Chris and George Brown's Billy J Whizz on an afternoon watched by Harry Cudmore, brought in by the RORC to offer coaching hints to those hoping to make what is expected to be two England teams for the Commodore's Cup in July.

Funnel trials begin next month and this is an area which Commodore has not contested for some time. "It will be interesting to have a look at what is going on at local and club level after being so closely involved in both Admiral's and America's Cup," Cudmore said. "It is really too early to say what will need to be done, but weekends like this early in the season offer useful pointers."

The New York Yacht Club's 2000 defence syndicate for the America's Cup has linked with the Portland Yacht Club, Maine, and Detroit's Bayview Yacht Club to encourage regional support.

Block to Cadle's prize

Basketball
DUNCAN HOOPER

When London Towers' players celebrate their Budweiser League championship this weekend in the final games of the regular season, their coach, Kevin Cadle, will be reflecting that the prize he most cherishes remains out of reach.

The new European Super League for the Continent's top 24 clubs launches in September, but English basketball does not rate highly enough to earn a place. Cadle, who is poised for a clean sweep of all the domestic titles for the fourth time in six years, recognises that Euro-

pean basketball is the only meaningful test of a league's competitive status. "English basketball is not ready for the Super League yet," the American acknowledges, "and we won't be ready for a while. We have to get one step at a time and go the finances and the administration right."

The International Federation's rankings have been based on the last three years, when English clubs' poor record in European competitions has left them rated below such countries as Georgia, Switzerland, Slovakia, Macedonia and Ukraine. Spain, Greece, Italy and France will each have three clubs in the Super League.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

thinking about helping Southampton stay up, but if the worst happens I can't see myself staying, Matthew Le Tissier.

I have never been more serious about anything in my life, says Bolton manager Roy Evans after his side's 4-3 Premiership victory over Newcastle.

I'm not considered stepping down. Wigan rugby league chairman Jack Robinson, who has been charged with conspiracy to defraud after a police investigation into an alleged bogus transfer deal.

I now feel I am out there on my own as Damon Hill rather than Graham Hill's son. Damon Hill, who has won the first two grands prix of the season.

Even today they are taking a lot of drugs to try to run 9.79 and can't run that fast. So how I got there, they have no idea. Ben Johnson, who broke the 100m world record at the 1988 Olympics before being stripped of the gold medal after testing positive for steroids.

WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

TODAY

Football

Matches not on pools coupons:
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Sil Sila a Smart answer to big boys

Racing
GREG WOOD

If you spot a besotted figure with a serious expression in the background at Kempton today, that will be the local trading standards officer, ready to pounce if anyone describes one of the three-year-old events as a Classic trial. In theory, the Masaka Stakes, for fillies, and the Easter Stakes, for colts, are the first steps on a road which leads to Newmarket on Guineas weekend, four weeks from now. In practice, they are a chance for clever trainers to win a Listed event with a second-rare before the serious animals appear.

Between them, last year's winners, Subya and Two

O'Clock Jump, managed just two more victories in 10 outings as they slipped rapidly into obscurity. In fact, the apparently insignificant Durante Stakes performer, in John Gosden's Presenting, but this too will surely prove to be the exception rather than the rule.

Just four of the field for the Masaka still hold the 1,000 Guineas entry, and these include the ever-optimistic Clive Brittain's Miss Universe, who was unsighted on both her starts at two.

One runner at least, however, is her stable's No 1 hope for Classic success, for the simple reason that she is their only hope. Sil Sila won both her starts at two, a maiden when she

started at 50-1 and then a Listed race at Newbury, at odds of 25-1. She was overlooked by punters on each occasion simply because Bryan Smart, who prepares Sil Sila at a small yard in Lambourn, is not the sort of

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Penny A Day
(Haydock 200)
NB: Elshabira
(Kempton 4.15)

trainer who is supposed to have good flat horses.

Like many other handlers who do not enjoy the patronage of the Maktoum brothers, though, Smart is more than capable of getting the best from a useful horse which the

Sheikhs have somehow managed to overlook.

Sil Sila is available at 40-1 for the 1,000 Guineas, and Tannia, runner-up in the Group One Moylagher Stud Stakes last year, will provide a stern test of her Classic credentials. John Dunlop's filly is likely to start among the market leaders today, but Sil Sila (3.15) has surprised backers before and can do so again.

Line Dancer, another to finish second in the Easter Stakes, but the less exposed Wood Magic (4.15) makes more appeal. David Loder, his trainer, was all but unbeatable in the early months of last season. The Queen's Prize Handicap, over two miles, is by some

distance the day's most interesting event from a punting point of view. A surprising number of the 18 runners are not certain to see out the trip and others have not shown their best form for months or even years, while River Keen, three times a winner on the level, never runs well on turf.

Proton will find supporters simply because he is trained by Reg Akerhurst, who won this race last year with Wishing, but this season's candidate surely has too much weight. The likely winner is at the other end of the list, where STALLED (nap 3.45) is set to carry just 7st 11lb. Peter Walwyn's gelding stays two miles well and has been running admirably for the Marchioness

of Blandford in amateur events. With the excellent claimer Matthew Henry now taking hold of the reins, he has an outstanding chance this afternoon and is a tempting 20-1 with Ladbrokes at morning odds.

A stayer at a rather shorter price will be Double Eclipse (1.30) in the opener at Haydock, a race which should be a formal prelude to Double Trigger's full brother moves on to more serious matters in the season's top marathon events.

Out On A Promise (next best 2.00) will enjoy the step up to 12 furlongs, while even under a penalty, Westcott Magic (2.30), who is ideally suited by the minimum trip, should take the Field Marshal Stakes.

BAYDOCK
1.30 DOUBLE ECLIPSE, who developed into a smart stayer last year, finishing third to Further Flight in the Group 3 Jockey Club Cup at Newmarket on his final start, should make short work of today's rivals if anywhere near fit.

2.00 PENNY A DAY, in good form over hurdles this winter, has won creditable 9/2 lengths third to Juyish in the Doncaster Shield at the Lincoln meeting, can concede weight all round.

HYPERION
3.15 ANTHELLA, who stayed on a quick 1/4 lengths third to Blue Iris in the Redcar Two-Year-Old Trophy over two furlongs last October, is bred (by Distant Relative) to be suited by this trip.

3.45 CHIEF'S SONG, who has been in good form over hurdles this winter, notably when winning the William Hill Handicap Hurdle at Sandown in November, is potentially capable of much better than he has shown on the flat so far.

KEMPTON
4.15 LINE DANCER, two lengths third to the subsequent Royal Lodge Stakes winner Mone in the Listed Washington Stakes over one and a half furlongs at Newbury in August before finishing 2 1/4 lengths second to Glory Of Dancer in the Group 1 Gran Criterium in Milan in 1995, is proven at this trip and should make a useful three-year-old.

4.45 NAVAL HUNTER, who looked much-improved when landing a Southwell maiden on Fibrous recently, is fairly handicapped.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HANDICAP (CLASS C) £7,650 added 3YO
Penalty Value £5,427

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2. 452042 WHITE EMER (27) (by Ambrose Tannard) 4 June 97 J 11 11
3. 452043 PERKINSON FLY (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
4. 452044 WOODIE (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
5. 452045 GREEN BARBERS (24) (by Ambrose Tannard) 4 June 97 J 11 11
6. 452046 BULL (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
7. 452047 WILSON (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
8. 452048 EMERY (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
9. 452049 LITTLE HOPKINS (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
10. 452050 MISSIE THE DODGE (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
11. 452051 GOLDEN POND (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
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28. 452068 D.M. DUB (28) (by David Wiggins) 4 June 97 J 11 11
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Sellars steps out of the shadows

Glenn Moore meets the Bolton midfield man relishing a return to the limelight

This is the man who left Blackburn just as the dream was beginning; this is the man who joined Leeds just as they embarked on the worst title defence in 30 years; this is the man who left Newcastle when they were top of the League to join Bolton, who were bottom.

Bolton took one point from the next 18. It could be said that, when it comes to his moves off the pitch, timing is not one of Scott Sellars' strong points.

Sellars admits he may have made bad decisions in his career, and, after that start at Bolton, wondered if his December transfer was another one. Now, however, as Wanderers attempt to continue their remarkable escape bid at Everton today, he is glad he moved. Not even Newcastle's stunning match at Anfield, which was the talk of training at Bolton on Thursday, could change his mind.

"I didn't think I could be playing in that because I wouldn't have been," he admitted in the restaurant at Burnden Park. "People say to me 'what did you leave Newcastle for?' but they don't realise I wasn't playing for the first team - that's why I left."

In doing so Sellars was going against the trend. With the increase in squads and wages at the big clubs there are plenty of experienced players in the stiffs. Until recently Liverpool had the most notable collection with Paul Stewart, Nigel Clough, Mark Walters and Jan Molloy on the books but off the team sheet.

"The problem at certain clubs is that the wages are so big no one can match them," Sellars said. "It is very difficult for players to take a £3,000-a-week drop. At Liverpool I would think the wages are exceptional."

"For me, I want to play. I was in the reserves at Newcastle and it was driving me crazy. We played at Gateshead on Monday nights. It's an athletics stadium so there was no atmosphere. I was playing with Philippe Albert, Paul Kitson, Marc Hottiger and Pavel Srnicek and we all had the same problem. We couldn't get our heads round it at all."

"It was all right if we hadn't had a game for two or three weeks, I would be ready to play, but when it was week in, week out it was so hard to get yourself going. I wasn't enjoying it. You get kids of 17, 18, wanting to kick you. They're trying to prove a point, make their mark in their career and you can accept that, but they're getting on your nerves, you're getting kicked all over the place. The standard is never the same as the first team. I came in for a couple of first-team games and it took me until half-time to adjust to the pace. I felt exhausted."

"I had already been out with injury for a year. I'd sat there for all the games, wishing the lads all the best, and it looked like I was set for another year of that. With respect to myself, I wasn't likely to get into the team ahead of David Ginola."

"It was hardest on Saturdays, when the manager named the team and you were 15th or 16th man. I found that really difficult. You've trained all week, you're fully fit and you're running to go. Kevin Keegan never names the team until quarter to two so you're all on tenterhooks. Then he does - and



Scott Sellars: 'I think the lads thought that if you went out and played you would win but it is more difficult than that'

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

you're not involved. I'm not a young man any more [he is 30] and it got too difficult. When Bolton came in, Kevin left the decision to me.

"After the first few weeks I did wonder what I had done. I had come from a club where you went out expecting to win to a club where you were hoping to win. My confidence suffered. There is nothing worse than getting beat every week, however well or badly you play - and confidence is everything in football."

As last week's fightback against Manchester City showed, Bolton now have that elusive quality, with four wins in seven matches. The turning point, perversely, was the 6-0 home defeat to Manchester United. "We hit rock bottom then. It was a realisation of what you need to be a good team - the work-rate and the organisation as well as the ability. I think the lads thought if you went out and played you would win but it's more difficult than

that in the Premier League. We had a chat where a few home truths were said and the result was a change in formation. We put one striker up and gave Sasa Curcic a free role. It has really helped us. It has made us a lot more solid at the back."

'After the first few weeks I did wonder what I had done. My confidence suffered'

When Sellars first arrived, Bolton had two managers, Roy McFarland and Colin Todd. "I found it a funny situation. You never really knew who was manager. In football you always know where the authority lies and it was difficult with two

people. I think everyone found that. There was no such doubt at Newcastle, or Blackburn or Leeds, each of whom had distinctive managers. In his second spell at Leeds an excess of midfielders led to Howard Wilkinson selling him - he admits he found Wilkinson "hard to get to know" - but there is nothing but admiration for Kenny Dalglish and Keegan.

"Kevin is the best manager I have played under for management and getting the most out of his players. He really made you feel like you were a good player. Kenny was deeper tactically, more likely to change things for different matches. Kevin put the onus on the players. He bought good players with good football brains and let them get on with it. We never practised any set-pieces. He just said: 'You are good players, go out and do it'. But he would see things at half-time. It was really eye-opening. He gave us a lot of freedom. Training was

brilliant. I got more out of that than playing for the reserves. "Kenny is great with players. People have this perception of him as a boss but with the players he is totally different, always having a laugh. I always felt he was taking the pressure off the players. He knows his football too. When he came the impact was incredible. We had heard rumours but we thought: 'Oh yes, he's packed it in at Liverpool and he's going to come to Blackburn with crowds of 10,000'. Then he walked into the changing-room with Ray Harford the Saturday morning of the Plymouth game and the lads were gobsmacked. We couldn't believe it."

"He gave everyone a lift. The fans always had this belief that the club didn't want to go up, that they were happy being fifth or sixth in the First Division. Kenny's arrival gave everyone belief that the club did want to go up. Then Jack Walker became the main man and the club just took off." Yet, no sooner

had they landed in the Premier Division than Sellars went back to Leeds, where he had started as an apprentice, and who were then the champions.

"Looking back, leaving Blackburn was a bad idea. I didn't think it through enough. I went because I was disappointed at the way I was being treated by Blackburn over a new contract. They were only offering two years. I wanted longer. With hindsight I can understand their view - I had never played in the top division."

"I could see Blackburn going places but Leeds had just won the championship, they were in the European Cup, they had been my first club and I wanted to prove they were wrong to sell me when I was young. It looked good. But I cannot look back with too much disappointment - they transferred me to Newcastle, where I probably had the most enjoyable time of my career. That was a great place to play football."

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Celtic seek inspiration against old rivals

For any team in Scotland to win a trophy these days, the accepted wisdom is that they must first beat Rangers. That is the task awaiting Celtic as they prepare for their Tennents Scottish Cup semi-final against their greatest rivals tomorrow.

Celtic approach the game as the holders of the famous trophy, but in the knowledge that they have failed to record a win over Rangers in five games so far this season. The two have been neck and neck in one of the most exciting championship races for many years and, while many see this as the final before the final, Aberdeen and Hearts have enough confidence in their own ability to suggest that the

winners at Hampden tomorrow will have to work hard to beat the eventual cup holders.

The Old Firm game dominates the weekend, with Celtic facing the prospect of finishing empty-handed in a year when they have turned the clock back to produce performances reminiscent of their glory days in the 1960s. Last Monday, they demolished Aberdeen 5-0, a result which sent shock waves through the Scottish football scene and, while the circumstances of the season demand that Celtic must now hope the Dons can do them a favour by taking league points from Rangers, as preparation for a tense semi-final the match was a good one - according to

Tommy Burns, the Celtic manager.

"The greatest confidence boost any team can get is to beat a quality side like Aberdeen by five goals and to play as well as we did," he said. "There has been little to choose between ourselves and Rangers this season and, while we will do our utmost in the game, we might also need a bit of luck. We are well aware that this is Celtic Football Club and our supporters turn up to be entertained - and also to see us win."

Burns will again look to the resurgent midfield play of Peter Grant, who has emerged from the dark shadows of Celtic's barren seasons to produce some of

David McKinney on the weekend's Scottish Cup semi-final action

the best football of his career. So much so, Burns has indicated that Grant would be his choice as Player of the Year.

Nevertheless, the key to victory for Celtic will be in creating chances, something they have failed to do in several of their games against Rangers this season. Rangers will await a fitness test on Richard Gough, their captain, before deciding their line-up and, with a five-point lead in the league,

Rangers know they would take a giant step towards the league and Cup double with a victory.

"The league title would be the most important prize for both sides," Walter Smith, the Rangers manager, said, "but at the same time both will obviously want to win this one. We won't worry about Celtic's win over Aberdeen because we will concentrate on our own game and on causing them problems."

If Celtic supporters recognise the necessity of beating Rangers to lift a trophy, the players of Hearts have a different battle to fight - against self-doubt - against Aberdeen at Hampden tonight. Five recent semi-finals have been lost,

some to apparently inferior opposition such as Airdrie and St. Mirren. Jim Jefferies, the Hearts manager, this week looked for evidence that things could be different this time.

"We are slight underdogs for Saturday, which will suit us," he said. "There's a big thing being made of this game because we are desperate to win the Cup for the first time in 40 years, but if we play as well as we can we will cause Aberdeen problems. I would disregard their defeat by Celtic because it will make them more determined to do well at Hampden."

For John Robertson and Gary Mackay, the game represents a final opportunity to get within

touching distance of silverware while Edinburgh hopes will rest mainly on the liberal sprinkling of quality youth at the club.

Aberdeen will welcome back Stewart McKimmie from injury with Roy Aitken, their manager, commenting: "It's all about how we perform on the day and Monday night's defeat is the last thing on my mind."

"We are the only undefeated Cup team in the country, having won eight ties, and now we are looking for nine."

"My side will show their character at Hampden and this game is going to be all about ability and character - and that is something we have shown that we have."

TEAM NEWS

Aberdeen v Leeds

With skipper Adams still recovering from knee surgery, Marshall continues to deputise in an unchanged Aberdeen team. Twenty-goal leading scorer Wright kicked his back in the 2-0 win over Newcastle, but is fit to take his place. For Leeds, leading scorer Votava is ruled out by a knee problem, while South African defender Randle faces a knee test on a similar injury. Donaghy and Worthington have still to recover from hamstring injuries, so 15-year-old Jackson has been lined up as cover.

Aston Villa v Arsenal

Republic of Ireland full-back Preston has a hamstring injury, so Minto is set to return to the Chelsea side. With Mark Hughes suspended, Furlong is likely to win a recall up front, while Romanian international Petrescu is available again after a one-match ban. Southgate has been ruled out for four weeks with a knee injury, so Stuart is set to deputise for Villa, who have Johnson back in contention after a knee injury and Joselin available again.

Coventry v Liverpool

Coventry manager Atkinson has injuries to defenders Shaw and Burrows, so he has delayed naming his side for a match which could have a big say in the Sky Blues' bid to escape relegation. Pendergast and Busst are likely to deputise. Liverpool manager Evans will have to reshuffle his line-up with Wright injured and Raddick starting a two-match ban. Hargreaves, who substituted for Wright in the 4-3 win over Newcastle, is set to

continue in defence, while Matteo looks likely to be recalled in place of Raddick.

Everton v Bolton

Ankle injuries have sidelined Everton strikers Stuart and Radelet while defender Short serves a one-match ban, but midfielder Parkinson will return while Edbroff has recovered from his ankle problem. Bolton, who are again without the injured Taggart, Barnham and Todd, have added striker Slater and Taylor to their squad along with recent defensive acquisition Small.

Middlesbrough v QPR

England defender Howey is ruled out by a hamstring injury, so Peacock is likely to return. Like striker Ferdinand, he will be keen to impress against his old club. Experienced midfielder Wilkins is suspended, so manager Barker will be forced to change the side which defeated Southampton 2-1 last weekend.

Nottingham Forest v Tottenham

England midfielder Stone, who scored the winner when the sides met at

White Hart Lane in October, has not trained all week because of a badly bruised foot and is rated a doubtful starter. Woon, dropped for last week's defeat at Wimbledon, is set to return. Tottenham are hopeful winger Fox will recover from a sprained ankle, but centre-backs Mabbutt and Callender are still out, while Walker and Sinton are doubtful with a virus. Former England youth goalkeeper Day could make his debut.

Southampton v Blackburn

Saints striker Weston is poised to return after missing the last two matches through suspension in place of Taylor. Blackburn are hopeful winger Fox will recover from a sprained ankle, but centre-backs Mabbutt and Callender are still out, while Walker and Sinton are doubtful with a virus. Former England youth goalkeeper Day could make his debut.

West Ham v Wimbledon

West Ham will probably field Portuguese youngster Dani up front for only the second time because Cottrell and Romanian international Oduro are ruled out. With suspended and Monson still out through injury, manager Redknapp has a number of options. Leading scorer Holdsworth may start the match for the Dons after scoring as a substitute in the win over Forest, but Norwegian international midfielder Lomahendson is likely to miss the rest of the season with a damaged ankle ligaments.

The Lowryesque Meadow Lane was never full enough for toilets to overflow

It was the late spring of 1964 and Notts County had just been relegated, after a disastrous season, to the Fourth Division, as it then was. I remember it well because there was a club-owned house two doors down from us, in genteel suburbia, and its occupant, centre-half Alex Gibson, used to come in for a chat, gave me his match programmes and used our telephone. Lower-division footballers could not then afford the luxuries of voice communication.

"Nobody will go to watch them now they've been relegated," I proudly told my family. "Shush," said my mother, "Alec's on the phone, he'll hear you." So it was with Notts County in the mid-1960s, the silence of despair.

Unless, of course, you were my history teacher, who used to bellow from a quiet Shion Kop: "Come on County, you're

supposed to be highly paid professional entertainers." Wrong on all counts, but it kept the crowd amused, at least for a while.

County then were primarily a home-grown side, lads from the city, from Carlton and from Eastwood providing the core of the team. Occasionally, there was an import, like Jim Raynor (goodness, he had played for Peterborough), George Hannah (well past his sell-by date), Mike Barber (always injured, part of his QPR background, I suppose), and Terry Bly (from Coventry). None settled properly, pigs out of luck.

But we did have Alex: a tower of strength in the middle of the defence, a one-club man from Auchinleck, a transient from one coal-mining area to another. I still have the postcards he sent as he went back home to his roots. We also had, in our Third

FAN'S EYE VIEW
No 144
Notts County
Paul Fryer

Division glory days, Tony Hateley (from Derby) and Jeff Astle (Eastwood), but bright Birmingham lights distracted them and took them away, both gone by the 1965-66 season.

Meadow Lane in the earlier 1960s was almost Lowryesque in its features. Never full enough for the toilets to overflow, always quiet enough for my history teacher to be heard. Yet that famed gable end over the stand, "Notts County Football Club, Founded 1862", gave a satisfying glimpse of past glories. We were rotten, but at least we were old.

County was the town's club.

No glory then, no expensive signings, just good park football players. My dad used to bet, by postal order, with a hotel owner in Paignton on the results of the County-Torquay United matches. He normally paid because we normally lost.

Once, when such things were permissible, if not enjoyed, I ran on to the pitch at the end of a meaningless game and patted Jim Raynor on the back. "Well played, Mr Raynor," he ignored me, but "Mr Raynor?" Deference to heroes, however substandard, a different world.

Now the ground and its

stands form a pattern of yellows, blacks and whites. The years of progress in the later 1970s and early 1980s, the years of Chiodo, Masson and McCulloch, briefly took County into the wide world of the First Division, and then back down again. No long-serving players then. Little trawling of the local leagues.

Notts County truly belong in the 1960s. That is where the heart is: a small club with a dedicated following. A timewarp club that should have been content to shuttle between the lower divisions. After all, in Nottingham, there are not too many people who openly admit to supporting County.

I'm no different. I transferred my allegiance to Forest when Alex Gibson retired. Mind you, he was good. Unlike me, though, he was County through and through.

السلامة

BRIEF
Britons
in Eritrea

Wednesday not out of trouble yet

Football

JOHN DOUGRAY
Middlesbrough
Sheffield Wednesday 3-1

After a tedious first half that must have sent Sky television viewers to sleep, this game sprang to life after the interval with a much-improved Middlesbrough scoring a convincing win to end any lingering relegation worries but heaping problems on an uninspiring Wednesday, who are still too near the bottom of the Premiership for comfort.

Wednesday, whose need to win was greater than Middlesbrough's, made a lively start, a shade too much so on the part of John Sheridan, who was cautioned for an illegal challenge on Graham Kavanagh.

A neat build-up by Marc Degryse and David Hirst gave Guy Whittingham a distant view of goal and he was not far off the target with rasping drive.

Chris Freestone, making his first senior start after an impressive scoring run in the Middlesbrough reserves, scored an early chance to celebrate, shooting straight at Kevin Pressman when he had the whole goal to aim at. However, when you make your Premiership debut alongside the famous Brazilian Juninho, chances are bound to come your way. The new partnership certainly looks promising.

However, with half an hour gone there had been precious little to excite the Middlesbrough supporters until Juninho found Jan Åge Fjørtoft just outside the penalty area. The Norwegian struck a fierce, low shot which was smartly turned

around the near post by Pressman.

There was an equally impressive effort by Kavanagh that whistled narrowly past the same post with the keeper scrambling along his line this time.

Seven minutes into the second half Middlesbrough took the lead after their midfielder Robbie Mustoe injected some much-needed urgency into the game. He ran purposefully at the Wednesday defence before setting up Juninho for a shot that Pressman blocked but only into the path of Fjørtoft, who scored easily.

Within a minute Wednesday had equalised, a 30-yard effort from Pembroke taking a deflection off Derek Whyte to wrongfoot the Middlesbrough keeper.

On the hour Middlesbrough made a substitution. Craig Hignett replacing the injured Kavanagh. Shortly afterwards, Middlesbrough regained the lead when Fjørtoft crisply found the net from the edge of the area for his second goal while Wednesday appealed in vain for offside.

The Wednesday defence was by now looking very shaky and they conceded a third goal when a Middlesbrough corner was headed on by Fjørtoft at the near post to give Freestone the opportunity to ram the ball into the net on his first Premiership start. The home fans went wild with delight.

Middlesbrough 4-2-2-4: Pressman; Atherton, Newson, Walker, Nicol (Grimes); Sheridan (Hirst), Whyte, Mustoe, Kavanagh (Hignett), 61, Brannan, Juninho, Freestone (Campbell), 84, Fjørtoft. Substitutes not used: Whelan.

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Referee: K Cooper (Pontypridd).

Fifa commend Keegan

Sepp Blatter, the general secretary of Fifa, the governing body of world football, gave his personal backing yesterday to Kevin Keegan's football philosophy. The Newcastle manager has reiterated his faith in the value of attacking football despite the disappointment of Wednesday's 4-3 defeat at Liverpool.

After their fourth defeat in the past six Premiership outings, which left them three points behind Manchester United, Keegan said: "We'll carry on playing this way, or go."

In a fax to Keegan, Blatter aligned Fifa with the Newcastle manager. Blatter said: "I have been greatly impressed by your remarks regarding your

commitment to attacking football, and your comments also about the referee's right to make human errors.

Please allow me on behalf of Fifa, and of all those who believe in the spirit of fair play, to commend you for the positive attitude you bring to our game with comments such as these."

Blatter added that he believed Keegan's dignified response to defeat in such a crucial game exemplified all that Fifa could want to see, and was a model for the world as a whole.

The French league agreed yesterday to remove all restrictions on European Union players from next season in the wake of the Bosman case.



Stopped in his tracks: Wigan's Henry Paul is collared by Chris Joynt (left) and Karl Hammond of St Helens at Knowsley Road yesterday

Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

Saints add more misery to Wigan's week

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

St Helens 41
Wigan 26

A mortifying week for Wigan ended with the greatest torment of all as they were well-beaten by the neighbours on whom they have inflicted so much misery.

Saints shrugged off a dreadful start at Knowsley Road yesterday when it seemed that so much recent history was destined to be repeated. They eventually outlasted Wigan decisively, even if their victory was not clinched until the last 10 minutes.

Although the 19-year-old winger, Danny Arnold, ran in a hat-trick of tries, making it seven in two games since the launch of Super League, and Bobbie Goulding made a major contribution by getting on top of Shaun Edwards, Saints' outstanding player was the Australian, Derek McVey, playing his first full match for the club.

It was McVey who began the repair work after a slipshod St Helens had conceded early tries to Terry O'Connor and Va'aiga Tuigamala, a one-handed pass out of the tackle giving Arnold his first try.

A suspiciously forward pass from O'Connor to Andy Farrell set up Martin Hall for a try which seemed to put Wigan back in control at 16-4, but that sparked a Saints backlash that brought them 22 points without reply.

McVey's driving run set up the position from which Karl Hammond and Scott Gibbs put Arnold over once more.

When McVey, looking an inspired signing from the Sydney Tigers, got his pass away again for Keiron Cunningham to score, Saints were only two points behind at half-time and would have been ahead if it had not been for two of Goulding's kicks hitting the post.

It is on fine margins like that

that so many of Saints' hopes have foundered in the past, but they were in no mood to let Wigan off the hook yesterday.

In the third quarter of the match, they drew level through Goulding's penalty and took the lead for the first time when Ian Pickavance charged straight through Henry Paul.

When McVey and Cunningham conjured up a third try for Arnold and Goulding chipped in with a drop goal, Wigan

seemed finished, but back they came through Rob Smyth, an early substitute for the injured Martin Offiah.

Goulding's penalty edged Saints further ahead but a second try for Hall, given on video evidence, and Paul's conversion had Wigan lurking just three points in arrears.

Saints kept their nerve, snatching the crucial try when Kris Radlinski lost Goulding's hard, low kick for Tommy

Martyn, back after almost a year out injured, to score.

Wigan's disarray was summed up when Andy Northley ran through Edwards' attempted tackle in injury time.

"Wigan will bounce back," Shaun McRae, Saints' coach, said. "There will be a pay-back from them, so we aren't getting carried away."

Wigan's Graeme West refused to blame the distraction of having two directors arrested in midweek for his side's failure.

"You can't use that as an excuse. They are professional players and they should not be worrying about anything else," he said. An extra worry for Wigan, however, is Offiah, who has having X-rays on his back last night and looks doubtful for the match against Warrington on Monday.

St Helens' Premiership record: Saints: 10 wins, 10 draws, 10 losses. Wigan: 10 wins, 10 draws, 10 losses. Saints' Premiership record: Saints: 10 wins, 10 draws, 10 losses. Wigan: 10 wins, 10 draws, 10 losses.

Kohe-Love intercepts Town's challenge

Warrington made it two Super League victories out of two yesterday but they made hard work of overcoming a spirited Wigan before running out 45-30 winners.

They led by only 18-12 at half-time and it took two interception tries midway through the second half to put them clear.

The first came from Warrington's substitute, Richard

Henare, who raced 50 yards to score and four minutes later Darren Carter's pass was intercepted by Tom Kohe-Love, who went 60 yards for a try. Kohe-Love rounded off a fine full debut three minutes from time when he crossed for his second.

In a frantic finish, Warrington added a further try by Mark Forster while Lee Chilton and

Logan Campbell crossed for Warrington.

Halifax Bluesox slipped to their second defeat in two Super League outings with their 34-22 loss at Oldham. They also had their prop Paul Anderson dismissed a minute before half-time for a high tackle on David Bradbury.

Oldham looked to have the game sewn up when they led

22-10, but on a bone-hard pitch Halifax drew level with two tries in six minutes through their diminutive scrum-half Craig Dean.

Oldham came back with late tries from Darren Abram - his second - and Martin Crompton. The scrum-half had a hand in most of Oldham's six tries and he was well supported by man of the match, Paul Atcheson.

Romania let Astafei jump for Germany

Athletics

Romania agreed to allow Alina Astafei, the Romanian-born world indoor high jump champion, to compete for her adopted country, Germany, at the Olympic Games after a 4-3 vote of the Romanian Olympic Committee yesterday.

The two countries had been negotiating for months on the sue with Romania demanding compensation for the money it spent developing the 26-year-old's talent but that appeared to have been dropped. "During the talks there was no reference to financial or other compensation," Lia Manoliu, president of the committee, said.

Astafei moved to Germany in 1993 but was banned from competing for three years by Romanian officials who were worried that more athletes might go west.

The Romanians cut short the ban and Astafei won the world indoor title in March 1995 in her first appearance in German colours after receiving a new passport.

Last month, Astafei regained the European indoor title in Stockholm that she had won in 1989 jumping for Romania.

Her regulations prevented Astafei from competing at Olympic level within three years of taking new citizenship with the agreement of the Romanian Olympic Committee.

Last week the Romanian sports minister, Alexandru Ionescu, said his country had not about \$450,000 "to create top medalist", and that Germany should pay Romania to compensate for Astafei's loss.

The committee also voted to allow 1995 world amateur boxing champion, Zoltan Lunca, to the handball player Emil-Luca to compete for Germany in the Atlanta Olympics.

Montgomerie leads Europeans

Golf

The Europeans made little impact against the home contingent in Thursday's opening round of the BellSouth Classic in Marietta, Georgia, with Colin Montgomerie heading the visitors but he lies five shots off the pace.

The Scot, runner-up in last week's Players' Championship and playing his final event prior to The Masters at Augusta, shot a one-under-par 71.

Ian Woosnam, the 1991 Masters champion, was one further adrift while the Czech-born Alexander Cejka, now a German citizen, shot a 77 on his American debut. Seve Ballesteros, who withdrew during the Players' Championship first round last week because of a back injury, continued his poor run of form with a 78 that included a

quadruple-bogey at the ninth. He hit his drive into the woods and played out sideways when he reached the green realised he had played the wrong ball and incurred a penalty stroke. The Ryder Cup captain then went back into the woods, found the correct ball and three-putted for an eight.

The joint leaders are Corey Pavin, Jim Gallagher and John Wilson on 66 with Russ Cochran and Neal Lancaster a stroke further adrift. Pavin had birdies at the last three holes while Gallagher hit an eagle at the par-five 18th after hitting a three-iron second shot to eight feet.

"I didn't get off to a great start," Pavin said, "but I got up and down a few times and just hung in there and things started to fall into place."

Three deaths at start of Safari Rally

Rallying

Three mechanics were drowned on yesterday's first day of the world championship Safari Rally. The trio were killed when their Land Rover support vehicle was washed away by a flash flood as they tried to negotiate a river crossing.

The accident happened near Ole Kejaado, about 65 kilometres south of the rally's Nairobi headquarters.

Kenya's traditional Easter event has a notorious reputation for sudden changes in the weather. Tracks and bonyard river beds have been known to fill in seconds as storms herald the start of the rainy season.

Hopkiss storms have already cut more than 200km from the near-3,000km test, which finishes tomorrow.

Sweden's Kenneth Eriksson gained a narrow first-day lead in his works Subaru. He battled the heavy rain, electrical trouble and fierce opposition from Mitsubishi driver Tommi Makinen to gain a 27-second advantage.

Colin McRae, the world champion, finished third, 82 seconds behind his team-mate Eriksson.

Athletics

Barney Ewell, a former world 100 metres record holder and three-times Olympic medalist, has died, aged 78. Ewell won an Olympic gold in 1948 as part of the US 4x100m relay team and silver in the 100m and 200m.

Baseball

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SPORT

Hill keeps Williams in front of the pack

Motor racing
DAVID TREMAYNE
reports from Buenos Aires

Can anyone stop the Williams-Renault steamroller? Apart from the numerous bumps on the Parc Almirante Brown circuit for tomorrow's Argentine Grand Prix, that is the underlying concern in Formula One circles following Damon Hill's runaway successes in Australia and Brazil. On current form, Williams are going to have to lose before anyone else can win.

As usual, yesterday's unofficial practice session was a game of bluff, with Damon Hill bidding his time and Jacques Villeneuve learning the circuit, which lies just outside the sprawl of Buenos Aires. Hill was content to follow his own agenda, shrugging off two spins and then setting the fastest time right at the end to displace Michael Schumacher, Jean Alesi and Mika Hakkinen.

The moods in the individual garages are enlightening. Benetton are quietly optimistic that they will have their straight-line speed problem rectified in time for the European Grand Prix at the Nürburgring at the end of the month. Ferrari are buoyed by Schumacher's speed thus far this weekend, but are not kidding themselves. His third place in Brazil owed more to the driver than to the car, and he was not amused to be lapped by Hill in the closing stages. Ferrari are working on a redesign of the car's aerodynamic package: Schumacher's on-the-limit driving has been glorious to watch, but reeks of frustration.

The German is also unhappy about the state of the track. "This morning it was very dirty, which you would expect on the first day," he said. "But the bumps are very, very bad too. This is not how it should be." At McLaren, Mika Hakkinen's speed has come as a profound relief, particularly in view of the performance of Hakkinen's Finnish



Argentinian Grand Prix
7 April 1996
Autodromo de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires
Circuit length: 2.64m
Lap record: Schumacher 1min 30.62sec, 105.25mph

rival, Mika Salo, in a Tyrrell whose running budget would barely pay McLaren's air fares. The greatest threat to Williams and Benetton may well come from Jordan in race to come, but thus far the British team have struggled to set up their cars for this twisting track. They nevertheless have the stability of their second season of collaboration with Peugeot and recently welcomed a cash injection from Benson & Hedges, which may finally enable them to expand the established top four into a top five.

Benetton, Ferrari and McLaren ultimately believe that their cars have greater development potential than the Williams, which is effectively an updated version of the 1995 car. However, even if this proves to be the case any crossover point may come too late to prevent the Didcot team from converting their dominance into yet more Championship success.

"As I predicted, it's pretty competitive," Hill said. "This circuit just requires a good balance to go fast and as today proved there are several cars here capable of doing that."

ARGENTINE GRAND PRIX (Buenos Aires, tomorrow) Leading times in yesterday's free practice sessions: 1 D Hill (GB), 1:30.119; 2 M Schumacher (Ger, Ferrari), 1:30.799; 3 J Alesi (Fr, Benetton), 1:30.819; 4 M Hakkinen (Fin, McLaren), 1:30.833; 5 M Salo (Fin, Tyrrell), 1:30.840; 6 H-H Frenzen (Ger, Sauber), 1:30.897; 7 R Barrichello (Bra, Jordan), 1:30.786; 8 D Coulthard (GB, McLaren), 1:30.770; 9 G Berger (Aut, Benetton), 1:30.850; 10 O Paves (Fr, Ligier), 1:31.013.

BOLTON'S PASS MASTER

Scott Sellars talks to Glenn Moore

26

A day when the River Thames turns blue



Eight strong favourites: The Cambridge crew complete their training for the 142nd Boat Race yesterday. The Light Blues are seeking a fourth consecutive victory against Oxford today that would extend their overall lead over the Dark Blues. The bookmakers expect them to be successful. Preview, page 24; photograph, Robert Hallam

In Monday's 24-page sports section



"I don't believe the way some of our players performed at Wembley. This is not to sound awful, but I almost wished that one of them would take a swing at the referee or that they would start fighting among themselves. Anything to show that they were actually interested."

In this week's Monday interview, Howard Wilkinson, the manager of Leeds United, talks to Ken Jones

Football fever

Comprehensive coverage of the weekend programme, including reports from every Premier League match and both Tennents Scottish Cup semi-finals

River blues

Hugh Matheson reports on the 142nd Boat Race and Dan Topolski, Oxford's director of coaching, gives his inside verdict

Argentinian beef

David Tremayne reports from Buenos Aires on the Argentinian Grand Prix

Sure bet

Full guide to the Easter Monday racing programme, including all 16 race cards

Plus: Sports betting. Book of the Week, and John Roberts has The Final Word

In tomorrow's Independent on Sunday



It is remarkable how rapidly the US Masters is transformed from a breathtaking sporting feat to a mere game of a Georgian spring into a savage challenge of a player's ability and an assault on his composure. It is enough to leave a scar on his soul. The battle for the famous Green Jacket doesn't really begin until the final nine holes, and by then the Augusta National has shed the trappings of paradise and takes on the character of a snake-infested swamp. Peter Corrigan looks at the contenders for the golf major of the year in Augusta, while Andrew Farnham meets the guru behind the European challenge of golf in Montgomerie (left) and Les Woosnam. Plus: Full reports on the race for the Premiership and the battle to stay in it. Ian Ridley on the war of nerves engulfing Kevin Keegan and his side while Newcastle's Robert Lee and Liverpool's Stan Collymore provide a players' insight into the match for all seasons.

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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

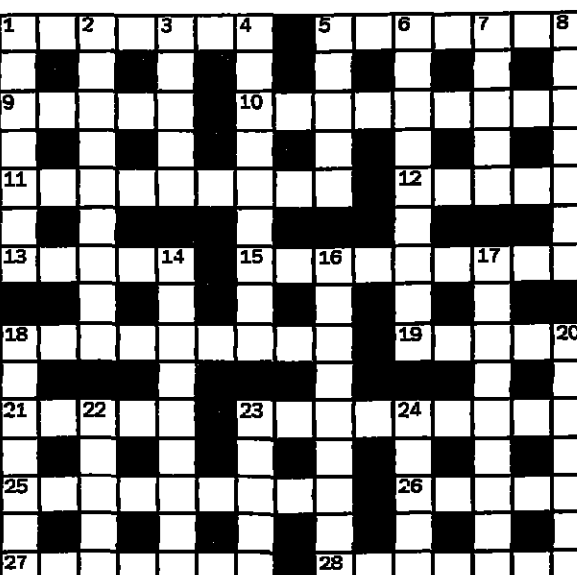
Clueless?

The Franklin Crossword Puzzle Solver has all the answers. To order Franklin products, ring 01252 861500.

No 2954, Saturday 6 April

By Sparius

Friday's solution



FRIDAY'S SOLUTION
ACROSS
1 PARLIAMENTARIAN
4 AD P
5 SUIPE
6 CHOICE
7 AFFIRM
8 A
9 A
10 A
11 A
12 A
13 A
14 A
15 A
16 A
17 A
18 A
19 A
20 A
21 A
22 A
23 A
24 A
25 A
26 A
27 A
DOWN
1 A
2 A
3 A
4 A
5 A
6 A
7 A
8 A
9 A
10 A
11 A
12 A
13 A
14 A
15 A
16 A
17 A
18 A
19 A
20 A
21 A
22 A
23 A
24 A
25 A
26 A
27 A

- ACROSS**
- 1 Bi element, rather pinkish? (7)
 - 5 Complaint by a graduate with specifically female job designation? (7)
 - 9 Severely criticize cook (5)
 - 10 A detachment in quarantine? (9)
 - 11 Couches constructed from old iron (9)
 - 12 Former ecclesiastical land returned by the Belgians (5)
 - 13 Power exercised by ill-bred swine (5)
 - 15 Be let out? Unlikely, when one's in dungeon (9)
 - 18 Glance and a smile from him? (6, 3)
 - 19 Inside boat, last place to look for set of charts? (5)
 - 21 Confusing situation about one type of cereal (5)
 - 23 Mode of transport which may have to be locked up? (5, 4)
 - 25 Sociable type once entering car in road race (9)
 - 26 Spirit, very old one found right across Denmark (5)
 - 27 Downpour's nothing to blithely enunciated in pavilion (7)
- DOWN**
- 2 Sudden extravagance, investing money in euphorbia (7)
 - 4 Calais people spurning hot fast food? (7)
 - 6 Writer in communal housing became ennobled (9)
 - 7 For starters, United's next cup fixture will be free (5)
 - 8 Cold shower you'd have, if stoned? (9)
 - 9 Merit award accepted by servicewomen in very small units (5)
 - 6 Girl has an upset in Hilton's blissful environment (7-2)
 - 7 Expatriate English side over-coming the French (5)
 - 8 Free from easiness, as religious education must be? (7)
 - 14 One at the top almost bowed out, for instance, feeling miserable (9)
 - 16 Green stuff formerly identified in brief record penned by botanist (9)
 - 17 Lofy religious group that's difficult to deal with? (4, 5)
 - 18 Sparkling bachelor overwhelmed by sorrow (7)
 - 20 Jolly astute to keep one's position (7)
 - 22 Bury missing start of season (5)
 - 23 Symbol many others will display (5)
 - 24 Aim to take pupils round the day before (5)

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Pride and passion will fill Maine Road

After the intoxicating drama of Anfield, the three-way race for the championship today runs smack into the six-team scramble to avoid the toxic trauma of relegation. For those who come off worse in the collision, the damage will go deeper than mere morale.

Local honour will be a factor in the Manchester derby at Maine Road, although United - three points clear of Newcastle with a game more played, and five ahead of Liverpool - have found visits to 16th-placed City less than fraught in recent times. Last season Alex Ferguson's men added a 3-0 romp to the 5-0 rout at Old Trafford. City, indeed, have not beaten their neighbours since Mel Machin was manager in 1989. The T-shirts which proclaimed "Mel's Marvels 5, Fergie's Walley 1" have long since turned to tatters. Symbolic, some might say, of their relationship to United, although the signs have been more positive during Alan Ball's reign.

In the meetings this season, one in the Premiership and the more recent one in the FA Cup, United won only 1-0 and 2-1. On the latter occasion, they needed an outrageous penalty award to kick-start their comeback. After Georgi Kinkladze had performed the rare feat of out-scheming Eric Cantona.

"The gap in the table is very big, but the gap between the teams is getting closer," Ball said. "They'll certainly take us seriously. We won't roll over like we've done before."

"None of our fans should be talking about suicide if United do the double over us. They are what we want to be. But we're only just starting. They've got a five-year start over us. Everything's in place there."

Phil Shaw previews a weekend where local honour is as crucial as Premiership points

of height in defence. Mikhail Kavelashvili, Kinkladze's fellow Georgian, is set for a momentous debut but, with Steve Lomas suspended and Garry Flitcroft sold, City may find it hard to win enough of the ball to supply their strikers.

As Ball is fond of pointing out, his Southampton side lost all three Easter matches two years ago, yet stayed up. His comments found an echo this week from Ron Atkinson. Coventry, bottom but one, receive Liverpool before going to United on Monday, but their manager asserted: "There's no rule that says we can't take 18 points from the last six games."

Indeed not, except that Coventry have so far managed only five wins out of 32. History, in the shape of 4-0 and 5-1 victories over Liverpool in 1983 and '92 respectively, shows what can be done. More pertinently, they won at Anfield soon after Atkinson's arrival last year, and also drew there in the autumn.

Queen's Park Rangers, one place above Coventry, may be unsure what to expect at Newcastle. Will it be a backlash - or has the manner of their defeat at Liverpool drained Kevin Keegan's team of their self-belief?

It is also reunion day at Southampton, where Blackburn hope to have Alan Shearer fit to join Tim Flowers against his previous club. After six defeats in seven games, what better time for that fallen Saint, Matthew Le Tissier to play like an angel once more? It may stiffen Southampton's resolve to learn that Aston Villa's press adverts for Monday carry the insensitive selling point: "Saints on the brink!"

Villa's Ugo Ehiogu has an incentive to excel in the game between the beaten FA Cup semi-finalists at Chelsea, which may otherwise have an end-of-season flavour. In the absence of Howey, Pallister, Tony Adams and Gareth Southgate, the uncapped 23-year-old is the only one of Terry Venables' England centre-backs currently in action.

The Endsleigh League champions-elect, Sunderland, must improve on a record of one win in eight visits to Barnsley to keep Derby and Crystal Palace at bay. Most First Division matches have some bearing on promotion and relegation, with some clubs, notably Birmingham, unsure which they are involved in.

Six of the Second Division's top seven meet while, in the Third, Gillingham's disappointment at seeing Preston open up a five-point lead could be assuaged by the news that a place in the record books could still be theirs. They have leaked just 18 goals - Port Vale set the landmark for the lower divisions with 21 in 1953/54 - and today tackle Hartlepool, who have not scored on their last six visits.



Ball: 'They'll take us seriously'

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